



Introduction

The overall aim for a successful hunt is to kill the animal instantaneously or as quick as possible into a manner that maximises hunter's safety and the efficiency of the hunt while minimizing animal suffering.

A prerequisite for responsible resource management is to have mechanisms to monitor the resources not only with respect to abundance and trends but also hunting methods and utilisation. In recognition of this, NAMMCO established an International Observation Scheme in 1998 and has since contracted observers to monitor hunting activities in member countries on an annual basis.

The current Observer Scheme came into force in 2019 and provide a mechanism for NAMMCO to oversee whether recommendations made by NAMMCO are implemented and national regulations are adhered to. It continues to ensure international transparency in whaling and sealing operations in the region.

Faroe Islands

Marine mammal hunting is subject to detailed regulations laid down by the Faroese Parliament and the Ministry of Fisheries.

Whales

Five whale species can be hunted in the Faroe Islands. Long-finned pilot whale, white-sided and white-headed dolphins and bottlenose dolphins are subject to drive hunts and the harbour porpoises are shot.

When a school of whales is sighted the district administrator is notified and after consulting with the whaling farmers a decision regarding which whaling bay to use is taken, informed by the prevailing currents. A whaling bay must meet certain criteria and there are currently 23 authorised whaling bays in the Faroes. Once the decision on location is made, the boats form a semi-circle behind the whales. Stones are thrown into the water to make air bubbles, which help herd the whales in the desired direction. Upon approaching the whaling bay, the boats are arranged by size. The smallest boats which can get closest to the beach, are in the front row, while the larger boats are kept behind. In this manner, the school is beached or driven so close to the beach that people can wade out to the whales to secure them for killing.

The killing method has changed very little throughout history. The whale is scored with a blowhole hook, after which the spinal lance is positioned in the midline between the blowhole and the dorsal fin at one hand's breadth behind the blowhole and directed at an angle approximately 30 degrees backward. With a single thrust followed by sideways movements the spinal cord and the surrounding blood vessels are severed, directly followed by severing the jugulars and the carotids with a whaling knife so that the whale can be bled properly. Once the cut is made, the whale lies completely paralyzed and unconscious.

Training

New legislation was introduced in 2015 and hunters are now obliged to have certification following an accredited course in pilot whaling to be entitled to kill whales. The course includes a review of the NAMMCO instruction manual on pilot whaling.

Monitoring

Monitoring and systematic reporting of the drive hunts take place through the district administrator's reports to the Ministry of Fisheries. For each drive, information is reported on where and when the school