

Management Committee Working Group on By-Catch

Report of the meeting Oct. 5, 09.00 - 10.20

1. Election of Chairman

Arne Bjørge, Norway was elected as chairman

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda in NAMMCO/MC/BC/ 1 rev was adopted.

3. Appointment of rapporteur

Jesper Koldborg Jensen, Greenland was appointed as rapporteur.

4. Definition of by-catch

The chairman pointed to the need for a definition of marine mammal by-catch. This was also pointed out at last years meeting (see page 73 and 74 of the 1998 Annual Report 1998).

The Working Group discussed document NAMMCO/MC/BC/2, prepared by the Chariman.

Koldborg Jensen (Greenland) pointed out that a definition of by-catch should reflect the combined fishing and hunting culture in Greenland. The Working Group agreed that incidental catches may be regarded as an important extra value to some fisheries, and that it is the responsibility of each member country to define the target species of their fisheries in their own progress reports. With this, the Working Group agreed to put forward the following definition of marine mammal by-catch for the Management Committees approval:

“Recognizing that by-catch of marine mammals may be a valuable contribution to the total catch, an appropriate definition of marine mammal by-catch is:

- Marine mammals taken incidentally in fisheries targeting other species.”

5. Progress in the development of procedures to record by-catch information.

Koldborg Jensen (Greenland) reported on the first initiative to make a special marine mammal report from the Greenlandic Fisheries Licenses Control from their control of the high seas fishing fleet. The first 8 months have given a few reports (less than 15) of by-catch of pinnipeds caught in trawl net.

Mortensen (Faroe Islands) reported that a by-catch recording system in the Faroes has been implemented and is included in the fisheries logbooks. In 1998 there was no by-catch reported in Faroese fisheries. The use of gill nets is prohibited in the Faroese Fishery Zone.

Vikingsson (Iceland) reported that in Iceland, by-catch is to be reported in fisheries log books. However, Iceland was at this time not able to present a report because the recording system has not been fully implemented.

Plassa (Norway) reported that the Ministry of Fisheries in April 1999 initiated a process to develop a strategy for recording marine mammal by-catch data. This will include specification of the guidelines for how to keep the fishing logbooks. Later, procedures for evaluating the quality of the data will be established.

The chairman concluded that the work to record by-catch data has been initiated and in some cases implemented in the member countries. However, a quality control of the procedures for obtaining data in the member countries was needed.

6. Addressing by-catch issues through NAMMCO

By-catch information may include data that require careful scientific consideration before it is released. The chairman therefore requested a NAMMCO policy on how the data should be collected, stored, used and published.

The Working Group agreed that there is a need for such a policy, which should underline the necessity of quality control by the Scientific Committee, and approval by the Council before by-catch data may be published.

7. Intercessional work

7.1. Establishment of a correspondence group

In order to facilitate progress in the study of by-catch, the Working Group agreed to establish a correspondence group who should communicate by e-mail before the next annual meeting of the Council.

The Correspondence Group members are Arne Bjørge, Chairman (Norway), Kristín Haraldsdóttir (Iceland), Kaj P. Mortensen (Faroe Island) and Jesper Koldborg Jensen (Greenland).

7.2. Terms of Reference for the Correspondence Group

For the approval of the Management Committee, the Working Group put forward the following Terms Of Reference:

The Correspondence Group will:

- a) consider different procedures to collect by-catch information and to compare the experiences in the member countries.
- b) prepare for discussions on quality control of the by-catch data by the Scientific Committee.
- c) prepare a NAMMCO policy on the use of marine mammal by-catch data.

8. Information on the development of technical measures for reducing/avoiding by-catch

The Working Group discussed document NAMMCO/MC/BC/2, prepared by the Secretariat.

The Working Group agreed on the procedure laid out by the secretariat to monitor the new information available in this field without duplicating work done in other organisations.

9. Recommendations

The Working Group recommends to the Management Committee that:

- The Management Committee approves the definition of marine mammal by-catch as outlined in item 4.
- The Management Committee establish an intersessional correspondence group to undertake the tasks identified in the proposed terms of reference (item 7.2.)
- The Working Group meet prior to the next annual meeting of the Management Committee to discuss progress achieved by member nations and the work undertaken by the intersessional Correspondence Group.

10. Adoption of report

The report was adopted after a draft version had been circulated to working group participants.

Annex 1

List of participants

Faroe Island

Kaj P. Mortensen

Greenland

Jesper Koldborg Jensen

Siverth Amondson

Iceland

Kristín Haraldsdóttir

Gísli Víkingsson

Norway

Bjørn Hugo Bendiksen

Arne Bjørge

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Elling Lorentsen

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