

NAMMCO



**COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS
REPORT**

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@ North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission

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The Committee on Hunting Methods (CHM) met on 29 November 2018 from 09:00 – 16:45 hrs. Present were Guðni Magnús Eiríksson and Kristján Loftsson (Iceland), Kathrine A. Ryeng and Hild Ynnesdal (Norway), Nette Levermann (Greenland), Signar Petersen (Faroe Islands) and Charlotte Winsnes.

Actions arising:

Secretariat:

- Make list of reference on hunting methods ([NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/02](#)) link based for the web.
- Extend the National Progress reports to also include information requested by CHM and other committees.
- Update table on S&L ([NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/05](#))
- Extend the literature review taking place on terrestrial vs marine TTD to include self-reporting
- Develop draft ToR for Workshop on self-reporting

Member countries:

- Give comments to narrative for instruction video by 31.12 2018 – send to Nette
- Update document 04 – update member countries on hunting information
- Generally, respond to text marked with yellow as input to this report

Greenland:

Finalise narrative for video with Henriksen Mekaniske verksted – investigate price for English version

1. OPENING REMARKS AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The chair, Guðni Magnús Eiríksson, welcomed the participants to the meeting. The meeting reviewed and adopted the agenda and list of documents – appendix 1

2. UPDATE FROM MEMBER COUNTRIES ON HUNTING METHODS AND REGULATIONS

Documents [NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/02](#) list of references on hunting methods in member countries and [NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/03](#) overview of laws and regulations in member countries were updated with new entries from Norway and Greenland (appendices 2 and 3). The listing of the Executive Order on polar bears under Greenland to be deleted. To make the references more easily accessible it was agreed to insert web-links where possible.

To standardise the member countries updates and information on quotas, struck and lost (S&L), hunting period, number of active boats etc. table [NAMMCO/CHM/-2018-02/04](#) (appendix 4) was presented, discussed and revised. CHM agreed that the appropriate committees for updates and discussion of strandings and infractions were BYCELS and CIO respectively. It was agreed that the table should be structured by stock and management area as opposed to populations.

Greenland informed that the new revised Executive Order regulating the hunt on large whales has been submitted to the Government and will come into force in January 2019. The changes are in line with decisions made at IWC 67 on extension of hunting period for minke whales to all year round and removal of the minimum length limit for hunting fin whales. No new regulations have been put into force in the other members countries since the last meeting.

Recognising that a lot of the same information are presented and discussed in various NAMMCO committees it was proposed that the Secretariat standardised the current National Progress Reports submitted annually by member countries for the use of the Scientific Committee to also include information as required by CHM, BYCELS and CIO. The benefits of organising a proper database at the Secretariat was underlined. A future data base should be developed so that information inputs are standardised and cover all necessary information dealt with by the different committees. Ideally member countries should submit all requested information once a year like with the NPR.

Petersen informed that the spinal lance developed for the pilot whale is also used in the dolphin drives. However, there are concerns that the blade of the lance is too wide for the dolphins and CHM recommended revising the blade for use in dolphin drives.

CHM took note of the information presented by member countries. As a principle CHM recommended that all data should be submitted once a year to the Secretariat through a revised NPR extended with information like hunting method, number of hunting entities (vessels) and hunting period.

3. STRUCK AND LOST (S&L)

Document [NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/05](#) was presented under this agenda item. It contains the updated table on S&L - (appendix 5). The table continues to be a working document. Descriptions of large whales were based on the reports of the Expert Group meetings on assessing TTD for large whales (2010 and 2015), for small whales from the report of the Expert Group meeting assessing hunting methods for small whales (2011), for walrus it was categorised according to stocks and the description of the seal hunts were taken from the document Overview of hunts in NAMMCO member countries (2018).

CHM reviewed the document in detail updating and discussing information hunt by hunt. These discussions are reflected under the member countries below. CHM previously agreed that the best way of calculating S&L rates were as the average of the annual rates for a range of years, including the information of the range.

Struck and lost is defined as animals being targeted/hit without being retrieved. This gives two scenarios –the animal is killed and then lost or the animal is injured and lost. Both scenarios are of concern for CHM from an efficiency and animal welfare point of view.

CHM emphasised that to consider S&L issues from an efficiency and animal welfare perspective does not require accurate numbers to identify hunts of special concern. For a hunt to be defined as problematic it must be of a certain magnitude. A high S&L rate in a small-scale hunt with annual catches in the range of 10 – 20 animals is not necessarily of great concern. CHM reiterated that the focus would be to identify priority hunts where S&L are thought to be high and where the catches are relatively high. CHM had previously agreed that S&L data for large whales were reliable, so these hunts did not represent a priority. The focus should be on the small whale and seal hunts to get reliable S&L data. To this end target hunts described in more detail below under member countries - had been identified and endorsed by Council.

The overview should ideally be structured by type of hunt – however for certain species different stocks where hunted using the same method but had different S&L rates. In these cases all the different stocks would be listed.

Faroe Islands

There is no quota for drive hunts and hunter's estimation of S&L and paper-based S&L rates are thought to be the same. NAMMCO SC advice on the sustainability of current removals has never included S&L and S&L rates used in NAMMCO advice is thus not applicable. NAMMCO SC has not given any advice on harbour porpoise and grey seals.

J. Olsen (doc 07 presented to the Expert Group meeting on small whales in 2011) referred to a study undertaken from 2005 – 2006 showing a S&L rate of 0 %. The method (drive) with whales being beached before the killing takes place means that the whale is stuck on the sea floor with very little probability to escape. In case of an escaped injured whale the circle of boats surrounding the beaching would be able to retrieve it. No such incidents are known to have happened.

Faroe Island's Executive Order No. 9 from 26 January 2017 states that the Sheriff (Syssemmannen) is responsible for reporting from the drives. For the harbour porpoise it is the hunter's responsibility to report the catch to the Sheriff. The regulations do not refer to struck and lost only catches.

Grey seals are killed for reduction purposes around fish farms. They are shot and not retrieved. Executive Order no 50 of 30 April 2018 on aquaculture states that all fish farms must report annually to the Food and Veterinary authorities all removals of seals whether they are killed or dead from other reasons. S&L seals are by default reported as part of the total removal number and since animals are usually not retrieved the S&L is set at 100 %.

Greenland

For the large whales there is no S&L rate used in the NAMMCO SC quota advice as these are strikes and not catch quotas. This means that S&L are included in the quota. CHM has previously 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.

Narwhal and Beluga are the only small whales with quota in Greenland. Advice are given by stock and therefore this is reflected in the table as the quota and S&L rates differs. There have been reports of very few catches and also sightings of beluga in east Greenland but the SC is not in a position to give advice, hence no quota applies to these animals. Also, a small fraction of the quota – approximately 20 – 30 animals annually - are taken with nets where the S&L is anticipated to be near 0%.

The other small whales - bottlenose whale, killer whale, pilot whale, harbour porpoise and dolphins – have no quota and therefore the question of S&L rates in NAMMCO SC advice and national quota settings are not applicable for these species. The hunters are obliged to report S&L for these hunts like for all hunts in Greenland.

For the seal hunts the same applies – no quota but self-reporting by the hunters. The exception is the harbour seal which has been protected since 2010.

Walrus advice are given by stock and the S&L rates are reflected in the table.

Greenland informed that no steps had been taken due to lack of resources to follow up the recommendation from NAMMCO 26 (2018) to collect S&L data on narwhal and beluga. They represent important subsistence hunts where presently catches are reported with S&L included, and the S&L rates used in assessment models are very high due to uncertainty on S&L rates.

Iceland

Reporting by hunters is mandatory for the whale hunts in Iceland. Like for the Greenlandic large whale hunts there is no S&L rates used in the NAMMCO SC advice or national advice. However, the Directorate of Fisheries has calculated S&L based on hunters reporting for both minke and fin whale hunts and these are reflected in the table.

In Iceland grey seal and harbour seal are hunted, but seal hunt in Iceland is small scale. Part of the seal hunt is done at river mouths for reduction purposes (grey seal). Iceland informed that no steps had been taken to follow up the recommendation from NAMMCO 26 (2018) to collect S&L data on harbour and

grey seals. The last meeting had noted that only fragmented reporting exists on seal hunts in Iceland and that there was a need for improvement.

Norway

Self-reporting by hunters of S&L is mandatory for whalers via the electronic logbook. In 2018 the hunters reported 2 animals S/L out of a total catch of 454. For the period 2010 – 2015 the Directorate of Fisheries has calculated S&L based on both sampling and hunters reporting and these are reflected in the table

For the pack ice sealing operations there has not been a requirement to report S&L only catch. Not equipped with electronic log books the sealers are obliged to submit a catch logbook to the Directorate of Fisheries upon their return from the hunting fields. In addition, the sealing vessels have an inspector onboard during the entire hunting period.

In 2019 the sealing vessels will report S&L for the first time. This is a direct response to the recommendation from NAMMCO 26 (2018) that Norway should collect S&L data on harp seals. Young seals float due to blubber thickness and are easily retrievable, whereas adult seals are thinner and may sink. It is therefore anticipated that S&L may happen when hunting adult seals but that this represents very marginal numbers. The pack ice hunt is interesting because no specific information exists on S&L furthermore it represents a very “easy” hunt to collect S&L rates and would as such be a valuable exercise.

CHM noted the updates to the table and recommendations and agreed to postpone discussing methods for collecting S&L until a future meeting when the table would be finalised.

4. COLLECTION OF TIME TO DEATH (TTD) DATA

NAMMCO 26 endorsed the CHM recommendations:

- Looking further into the possibility of implementing self-reporting methods to describe the killing efficiency of the hunt.
- Convening a workshop on alternative methods to collect data on the efficiency of the hunt.

At the last meeting CHM agreed that it would be interesting to compare self-reporting by hunters with the controlled scientific method. One idea had been to analyse already collected Norwegian data together with Greenlandic data to see how these compared. Another idea was to make preliminary studies onboard a Norwegian whaling vessel during the 2018 season.

Ryeng reported that she had been onboard a whaling vessel in the 2008 season and had discussed self-reporting with the hunters. In her opinion, self-reporting has an inherent weakness due to the fact that the data are reported by the hunters themselves, which may be criticized as a non-reliable way of reporting sensitive information such as TTD. Hence, such data should continue to be collected by independent and skilled observers. However, if self-reporting of TTD is to be used for some purpose, it should be accompanied by some sort of scientific documentation to be credible.

On the issue of making a comparison of Norwegian and Greenlandic data the CHM recognised that this would be feasible. However, logically the different ways of collecting the data may affect the TTD estimates as well as the uncertainty of the estimates.

The established standardised method of collecting TTD data used in Iceland and Norway for the whale hunts is the best and most accurate method, however self-reporting generate valuable information every year with respect to the efficiency of hunts and it is the prevailing method for most of the hunts in NAMMCO. Scientists and managers depend on self-reporting to get essential and necessary data for generating advice and making management decisions. CHM acknowledged the importance of developing the best possible methods for self-reporting by hunters and agreed that the best way forward

was to organise a Workshop investigating the concept of and various existing methods for self-reporting. The Secretariat would draft a ToR for consideration at the next meeting.

CHM had tasked the Secretariat to undertake a review of available literature on hunting efficiency in terrestrial and marine mammal hunts. The review had now been initiated and was being carried out by the NAMMCO intern under the supervision of Kathrine Ryeng. CHM proposed that this review be extended to also include self-reporting of the efficiency of hunts.

5. OTHER ISSUES DERIVING FROM NAMMCO 26

NAMMCO 26 supported that the instruction video developed by Greenland in collaboration with Henriksen Mekaniske Verksted on the handling of the penthrite Whale grenade-99 be finalised for the use of all interested NAMMCO countries.

The last meeting reviewed the video and agreed that the committee would discuss and agree on the narrative by correspondence. One general remark made was to insert arrows on the drawings for the different elements of the grenade. Furthermore it was agreed look into the financial aspects of making the video in English for the use of all members.

No progress had been made since the last meeting. To accommodate progress all CHM members were given both the video and the text (both original and one with comments from Egil Ole Øen) at the meeting. CHM agreed to send comments to Nette Levermann by 31.12 2018 after which time she would finalise the video in cooperation with Henriksen Mekaniske Verksted.

6. WORKPLAN 2019-2022

Document [NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/06](#) was presented under this agenda item. It gives an overview of all recommendations and responses from all Workshops and Expert Group meetings organised by the CHM and the member countries responses.

CHM reviewed the document and updates where noted on the following recommendations and responses:

- **WS-2006/2.2.4:** *CHM had advised Iceland and Norway to address hunters with the aim of finding out why the harpoon line breaks.*

This was explained by the line coming into the propel as a result of the direction of the whale and the boat. It occurs rarely and there are no obvious actions that can be taken to prevent it. The line could also break as it was cut on bones in the whale. However, according to Norwegian hunters this was more often a problem previously, when the cold harpoon was used in the minke whale hunt.

- **WS-2006/2.3.3:** *meeting between hunters and local government in Greenland to discuss all aspects of hunting. Previously meetings took place every 2 or 3 year and the next was planned for end of 2018.*

No further information available.

- **EGM-2009/Firearms:** *ammunition studies Norwegian harp seal hunt*
- **EGM-2009/Bleeding out:** *studies on duration of bleeding in harp seals*

Both ongoing – anticipated some results in 2019.

- **EGM-2011/Struck and lost**

Greenland has previously reported that instead of all S&L animals being subtracted from the quota and the licence is considered used, a trial has been put in place for walrus, where S&L reports do not result in quota reducing, and the license can be used for a new animal, when the S&L has been reported to the municipality. This is an approach to get an estimate of S&L rates in different part of Greenland.

This requires a change in the current Executive Order, which is expected to come into force early in 2019, thus the trial is awaiting this change.

- **WS-1999, EGM-2010 and EGM-2015/Rifle hunt in Greenland**

Several recommendations related to concern for the rifle hunt in Greenland and the fact that it is increasing.

The hunt is in most areas a subsistence based hunt with quota allocations set under national political decisions Not followed up due to lack of resources.

CHM discussed future work and agreed that the work of the committee would benefit from making a plan for the coming 4 years. As a starting point CHM discussed criteria for future work and agreed on the following: *To focus on hunts where animal welfare aspects are highlighted in recommendations and where improvements are important and possible.*

Based on the discussions during the meeting CHM identified the following priorities - not in order of priority - to be included in a work plan:

Finalising the video on handling Whale grenade 99- January/February 2019

Workshop on self-reporting fall 2019

Focus on the rifle hunt for minke whales in Greenland

Focus on netting as hunting method – narwhal/beluga/ringed seals

EGM small cetaceans – last meeting in 2011 and Greenland has new data

EGM large cetaceans – Norway to collect TTD in 2022 according to recommendations

Spinal lance revision for the white-sided dolphin

CHM agreed to make the work plan a standard agenda item and continue the discussion at the next meeting. It was also recognised that finalising the video and planning the Worksop would be a priority for the next meeting.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The member countries have agreed to a rotation plan for the various committees in NAMMCO. This is to ensure balanced representation between the members. This means that the committees cannot freely choose among its members anymore as the country filiation will be fixed by the rotation plan.

Iceland took over the chair in 2017 for 2 years and the chairmanship ends after the next Council meeting in April 2019. Next in line is Norway.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for 7 February 2019 in Copenhagen.

9. AOB

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

10. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

The report was approved by correspondence on 21 January 2019.

Appendix 1

AGENDA

1. Opening procedure
 - Adoption of agenda and review of documents
2. Update from members on hunting methods and regulations
3. Struck and Lost
4. Collection of TTD data
5. Other issues deriving from the Council
6. Strategy for CHM work 2019 – 2022
7. Election of officers
8. Next meeting
9. AOB

List of documents

NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/01: Annotated agenda and list of documents
NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/02: List of references on Hunting methods
NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/03: List of laws and regulations in member countries
NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/04: Information from members on quota, catch etc
NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/05: Struck and lost – working document
NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/06: Overview of recommendations and responses CHM and Council