

## **REPORT OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

*Hotel Føroyar, Tórshavn, Faroe Islands, 28-30 May 1997*

### **1.-3. OPENING PROCEDURES**

*The Chairman of the Management Committee, Einar Lemche, welcomed delegations from all member countries to the meeting. On behalf of the Committee he also welcomed the attendance of observers present at the meeting of the Council as observers in the Management Committee. It was noted in this connection that until more detailed criteria had been developed for admission procedures, it was the practice of the Management Committee to decide upon the admission of observers at each meeting.*

*The Chairman recommended the establishment of a drafting group (Agenda item 6.3) consisting of scientific advisers from member delegations in order to ensure clarity and accuracy in the formulation of requests and recommendations developed by the Management Committee. It was agreed to establish such a group at this meeting.*

*The draft agenda, as contained in Appendix 1, was adopted without amendment, and the Secretary, Kate Sanderson, was appointed rapporteur.*

### **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

*The Chairman noted that the Council had thoroughly reviewed the Report of the Fifth Meeting of the Scientific Committee (NAMMCO/7/6)*

and had endorsed a number of recommendations for further research related to its findings.

In this connection the Chairman also referred to agenda items 5 and 6, where matters arising from the Scientific Committee are also dealt with in relation to proposals for conservation and management (item 5), or as recommendations for further scientific research (item 6).

With respect to the Central North Atlantic minke whale stock, the Management Committee noted the revised abundance estimate of 72,000 for this stock as the best available. The Management Committee further noted the progress made so far by the Scientific Committee in addressing the requested assessment of the status of the stock, and commended their efforts to complete the work as soon as possible. The Management Committee looks forward to receiving the results of this work when they become available and if the Council so decides.

## 5. PROPOSALS FOR CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

### 5.1 Earlier proposals

The Committee reviewed earlier proposals and conclusions made with respect to stocks and species for which the Council has requested advice (see Appendix 2). The Chairman requested comments and any new information member countries may wish to provide on developments regarding these earlier conclusions.

*Northern bottlenose whales* (Appendix 2, item 1):

The Faroe Islands informed the Management Committee that with respect to northern bottlenose whales, no changes had yet been made to existing Faroese management policies for this species in Faroese waters.

*Atlantic walrus (Appendix 2, item 2):*

With respect to the Atlantic walrus, Greenland informed the Management Committee of developments in implementing legislation in Greenland with the view to further reducing the level of walrus catches in West Greenland. Further to information provided to the Management Committee at its last meeting (see *NAMMCO Annual Report 1996*, p. 80), Greenland reported that new regulations were currently being finalised which would further limit catches of walruses on the west and east coasts of Greenland, and which included the establishment of protected areas.

*Ringed seals (Appendix 2, item 3) - see under 6.2.1 ii).*

*Harp seals in the Northwest Atlantic (Appendix 2, item 4):*

With respect to harp seals in the Northwest Atlantic, the Management Committee noted the increased catches of harp seals in Canada in 1996 and 1997 and that the combined catches in Canada and Greenland now approximate the estimated replacement yield.

*Hooded seals in the Northwest Atlantic (Appendix 2, item 5):*

With respect to hooded seals in the Northwest Atlantic, the Management Committee noted that the Scientific Committee had nothing new to add to information reviewed at its last meeting. The catch of hooded seals in Canada was approximately 25,000 in 1996.

Finally, it was agreed that in the future, an updated list of proposals for conservation and management made by the Management Committee should be prepared in advance of each meeting for the reference of delegates and for subsequent inclusion as an appendix to the final report of the Management Committee (Appendix 2).

## 5.2 New proposals

### *Long-finned pilot whales*

The Faroe Islands informed the Management Committee of their wish to continue to utilise pilot whales in an opportunistic manner as has been done for centuries. Catches of pilot whales may vary from year to year and total allowable catches are not considered appropriate for this form of hunt. In some years catches may exceed 2,000 whales, and in other years they may be much smaller, while the average annual catch since 1971 (1971-96) has been c. 1,400.

The Management Committee noted the findings and conclusions of the Scientific Committee, through its review of the ICES Study Group Report and the analysis of data from NASS-95 with respect to the status of long-finned pilot whales in the North Atlantic (see NAMMCO/7/6 pp. 13-17), which also confirmed that the best available abundance estimate of pilot whales in the Central and Northeast Atlantic is 778,000. With respect to stock identity it was noted that there is more than one stock throughout the entire North Atlantic, while the two extreme hypotheses of i) a single stock across the entire North Atlantic stock, and ii) a discrete, localised stock restricted to Faroese waters, had been ruled out.

The Management Committee further noted the conclusions of the Scientific Committee that the effects of the drive hunt of pilot whales in the Faroe Islands have had a negligible effect on the population, and that an annual catch of 2,000 individuals in the eastern Atlantic corresponds to an exploitation rate of 0.26%.

Based on the comprehensive advice which had now been provided by the Scientific Committee to requests forwarded from the Council, the

Management Committee *concluded* that the drive hunt of pilot whales in the Faroe Islands is sustainable.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

### 6.1 Former recommendations

#### i) *Harp and hooded seals*

With respect to the Council's request for advice on harp and hooded seals (see *NAMMCO Annual Report 1996:132-33*), the Management Committee noted that at its 1996 meeting, the Scientific Committee had reviewed the latest information on the Northwest Atlantic stocks of these species (see also above under 5.1), but that a number of issues regarding the status of stocks of hooded seals in the Greenland Sea and harp seals in the Greenland, Barents and White Seas still remained to be addressed.

It was noted that at its Copenhagen meeting in August/September 1997, the Joint ICES/NAFO Working Group on harp and hooded seals will in particular address the status of the harp seals stock in the Greenland Sea and the Barents and White Seas and the hooded seal stock in the Greenland Sea. The ecological role of these stocks will also be discussed. Aware that aerial surveys have been carried out in 1997 to assess both the Greenland Sea hooded seal stock and the Barents/White Sea harp seal stock, updated abundance estimates for these two stocks are expected. An updated stock estimate for the Barents/White Sea stock of harp seals will make it possible to establish a more reliable estimate of the annual food consumption of this stock. Current knowledge about the feeding habits of harp and hooded seals in the Greenland Sea are, however, insufficient to facilitate calculation of food consumption of these stocks.

In anticipation of the Scientific Committee review of this research in early 1998, the Management Committee agreed to return to this matter at its next meeting.

*ii) Monitoring of stocks and trends in stocks of marine mammals in the North Atlantic*

The Management Committee recommended that the Scientific Committee continues its work to monitor stock levels and trends in all stocks of marine mammals in the North Atlantic in accordance with previous recommendations (see NAMMCO Annual Report 1996:131-132). In this context the Management Committee recommended that the Scientific Committee be encouraged to prioritize calculation of the abundance of species covered by NASS-95, in particular those species presently harvested and species considered to be important with respect to interactions with fisheries.

## **6.2 New recommendations for scientific research**

The Management Committee agreed to make the following further recommendations for scientific research:

### **6.2.1 Stocks/species**

*i) Harbour porpoise*

The Management Committee noted that the harbour porpoise is common to all NAMMCO member countries, and that the extent of current research activities and expertise in member countries and elsewhere across the North Atlantic would provide an excellent basis for undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the species throughout its range. The Management Committee recommended that the Scientific

Committee be requested to perform such an assessment, which might include distribution and abundance, stock identity, biological parameters, ecological interaction, pollutants, removals and sustainability of removals.

*ii) Ringed seal*

The Management Committee **recommended** that the Scientific Committee be requested to advise on what scientific studies need to be completed to evaluate the effects of changed levels of removals of ringed seals in West and East Greenland.

*iii) Narwhal and beluga*

The Management Committee **recommended** that the Scientific Committee examine the population status of narwhals and belugas (white whales) throughout the North Atlantic.

**6.2.2 Marine mammals/fisheries interactions:**

*i)* The Management Committee encourages scientific work that leads to a better understanding of interactions between marine mammals and commercially exploited marine resources, and **recommended** that the Scientific Committee periodically review and update available knowledge in this field.

*ii)* The Management Committee **recommended** that NAMMCO member countries study the ecological interaction between dolphin species (e.g., *Lagenorhynchus spp.*) and fisheries, with the view to future assessments of such interactions.

*iii)* The Management Committee **recommended** that special attention be paid to studies related to competition and the economic aspects of marine mammal–fisheries interactions.

### **6.3 Priority of recommendations**

The Management Committee discussed the work load for the Scientific Committee related to the above recommendations, and **recommended** that prior to the next meeting of the Management Committee, the Scientific Committee should pay special attention to the following of the above recommendations:

Harp and hooded seals (6.1 i)); harbour porpoise (6.2.1 i)), ringed seals (6.2.1 ii)), and studies related to competition and economic aspects of marine mammal-fisheries interactions (6.2.2 iii)). The Scientific Committee should draw on all relevant expertise to this end.

The Management Committee noted that the recommendation under 6.2.2 ii) with respect to interactions between dolphin species and fisheries is directed to member countries.

## **7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JOINT NAMMCO CONTROL SCHEME**

The Chairman referred to the Council's decision at its last meeting to adopt the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme for the Hunting of Marine Mammals (as contained in the NAMMCO Annual Report 1996: 69-75), and noted that according to Section C of the Control Scheme, "it was the intention of the member countries to implement the Scheme or parts thereof at the beginning of the hunting season in 1997."



## **7.1 Implementation of Section A – Common elements for national inspection schemes for coastal whaling**

The Chairman requested updates from members of the Management Committee in relation to progress in implementing Part A of the Joint Control Scheme – Common elements for national inspection schemes for coastal whaling in NAMMCO member countries.

With respect to the Faroe Islands and Iceland, it was noted that there were not at present any whaling activities carried out in these countries of the type to which provisions under Section A applied, i.e. hunting of whales from vessels with a harpoon gun.

Greenland reported that although there had been some delays in implementing revised regulations in accordance with Section A of the Joint Control Scheme, Greenland Home Rule authorities were currently preparing a new directive in connection with the hunting of large whales from vessels using a harpoon gun.

Norway reported on national measures with respect to inspection of Norwegian minke whaling and sealing operations, in which an inspector is present on board each vessel. It was also reported that a new mechanism for electronic surveillance of whaling activities (cf. Joint Control Scheme, article A.3.3) was currently being examined.

## **7.2 Implementation of Section B – International Observation Scheme**

The Chairman noted that according to Section C of the Control Scheme, as adopted by the Council in 1996, further work on necessary guidelines for implementation of Section B -International Observation Scheme - was to be undertaken by the Management Committee.

The Chairman referred to NAMMCO/7/MC/3, the Report of the Working Group on Inspection and Observation (5-7 November 1996), which contained as Appendix 3 the Guidelines to Section B of the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme. It was noted that the Management Committee had instructed the Working Group to develop these guidelines, and that they had been adopted by the Management Committee by correspondence in February 1997.

The Management Committee **recommended** that the International Observation Scheme be implemented in 1998, according to the adopted guidelines and the specified procedures for planning the scope of observation activities and appointing observers. It was further **recommended** that an amount of NOK 120,000 be allocated for the Scheme in 1998. It was also noted in this connection that according to article B.7 of the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme, the possibility also exists for different arrangements for covering costs related to the activities of NAMMCO observers, which can be agreed between NAMMCO and the country sending the observer.

The Management Committee drew the Council's attention to the fact that, as a result of the recommendation to implement the Observation Scheme in 1998, funds already allocated for the implementation of the Scheme in 1997 would not now be used in this financial year.

The Management Committee also **agreed** to request the Working Group on Inspection and Observation to complete the outstanding practical

documentation for observers, drafts of which had been prepared by the Secretariat.

Finally, the Management Committee stressed the need for the Secretariat to maintain active consultation with the relevant authorities in member countries when developing proposals for the scope and range of observation activities.

## **8. RULES OF PROCEDURE**

The Management Committee recommended an amendment in the Rules of Procedure under Article IV, paragraphs a), b) and c) with respect to specified deadlines for the development, circulation and amendment of the Committee's agenda prior to its meetings. These would now read 45 days, 30 days and 15 days respectively. It was noted that this amendment was proposed for practical reasons related to the Secretariat's coordination of preparations for meetings.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### *i) Information on marine mammal management and utilisation*

The Management Committee noted the value of having an updated overview of marine mammal utilisation and management in member countries in the context of its deliberations. It was therefore recommended that National Progress Reports submitted to the Scientific Committee each year should also be available to the Management Committee, and that these should contain information on annual catch levels, as well as research activities and management measures.

The Management Committee recommended that Canada and Russia be invited to provide NAMMCO with similar information on catch levels and

management strategies with respect to shared stocks of marine mammals.

*ii) By-catches of marine mammals*

The Management Committee noted the duties of States under article 61.4 of UNCLOS in respect of by-catches and agreed to establish a Working Group to consider how this matter could be addressed at its next meeting.

## **10. ADOPTION OF REPORT**

A draft report of the Management Committee was reviewed and adopted on 30 May 1997 and finalised by correspondence in June 1997.

## **11. LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

*Management Committee:*

NAMMCO/7/MC/2	Agenda
NAMMCO/7/MC/3	Report of the Fifth Meeting of the Working Group on Inspection and Observation (Copenhagen, November 1996) including as Appendix 3 the Guidelines to Section B - International Observation Scheme - of the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme.
NAMMCO/7/MC/4	Rules of Procedure for the Management Committee

*Council:*

NAMMCO/7/6	Report of the Scientific Committee
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## **REFERENCES**

*NAMMCO Annual Report 1996. North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission, Tromsø, 1997 227pp.*

## **AGENDA**

1. Chairman's opening remarks
2. Adoption of agenda
3. Appointment of rapporteur
4. Matters arising from the Scientific Committee
5. Proposals for conservation and management
  - 5.1 Earlier proposals
  - 5.1 New proposals
6. Recommendations for scientific research
  - 6.1 Recommendations from the Scientific Committee
  - 6.2 Other recommendations
  - 6.3 Establishment of drafting group for scientific recommendations
7. Implementation of the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme
8. Rules of Procedure for the Management Committee
9. Any other business
10. Adoption of report

**LIST OF PROPOSALS FOR CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT**  
(Up to and including NAMMCO/7 - 1997)

***Northern bottlenose whale***

The Management Committee discussed the advice of the Scientific Committee on the status of the northern bottlenose whale and noted that this was the first conclusive analysis on which management of the northern bottlenose whale could be based.

The Management Committee accepted that the population trajectories indicated that the traditional coastal drive hunt in the Faroe Islands did not have any noticeable effect on the stock and that removals of fewer than 300 whales a year were not likely to lead to a decline in the stock (*NAMMCO Annual Report 1995*: 48)

***Atlantic walrus***

The Management Committee examined the advice of the Scientific Committee on Atlantic Walrus and noted the apparent decline which the Scientific Committee identified in respect to "functional" stocks of walrus of Central West Greenland and Baffin Bay.

While recognizing the over all priority of further work to clarify and confirm the delineation and abundance of walrus stocks in the North Atlantic area, the Management Committee recommends that Greenland take appropriate steps to arrest the decline of walrus along its west coast.

Taking into account the views of the Scientific Committee that the Baffin Bay walrus stock is jointly shared with Canada and that the West Greenland stock might be shared, the Management Committee encourages Canada to consider working cooperatively with Greenland to assist in the achievement of these objectives (*NAMMCO Annual Report 1995*: 49).

***Ringed seal***

The Management Committee noted the conclusions of the Scientific Committee on the assessment of ringed seals in the North Atlantic, which had been carried out through the Scientific Committee Working Group on Ringed Seals. In particular, the Management Committee noted that three geographical areas had been identified for assessing the status of ringed seals, and that abundance estimates were only available for Area 1 (defined by Baffin Bay, Davis Strait, eastern Hudson Strait, Labrador Sea, Lancaster, Jones and Smith sounds - see *NAMMCO Annual Report 1996*:149 (Fig.1)).

While recognising the necessity for further monitoring of ringed seal removals in Area 1, the Management Committee endorsed the Scientific Committee's conclusions that present removals of ringed seals in Area 1 can be considered sustainable (*NAMMCO Annual Report 1996*: 81).

***Harp seals in the Northwest Atlantic***

The Management Committee noted that a new abundance estimate for Northwest Atlantic harp seals of 4.8 million was available, based on a pup production estimate for 1994 of 702,900. The Management Committee also noted the conclusion that the Northwest Atlantic population of harp seals has been growing at a rate of 5% per year since 1990, and that the 1996 population was estimated to be 5.1 million, with a calculated replacement yield of 287,000.

The Management Committee concluded that catch levels of harp seals in Greenland and Canada from 1990 to 1995 were well below the calculated replacement yields in this period (*NAMMCO Annual Report 1996*: 81).

#### ***Hooded seals in the Northwest Atlantic***

Noting the Scientific Committee's review of available analyses of hooded seal pup production, which recognised that calculations are dependent on the particular rate of pup mortality used, as well as the harvest regimes, the Management Committee concluded that present catches of hooded seals in the Northwest Atlantic (1990-1995) were below the estimated replacement yields of 22,900 calculated for a harvest of pups only, and 11,800 calculated for a harvest of 1-year and older animals only (*NAMMCO Annual Report 1996*: 81-82).

#### ***Long-finned pilot whales***

*The Faroe Islands informed the Management Committee of their wish to continue to utilise pilot whales in an opportunistic manner as has been done for centuries. Catches of pilot whales may vary from year to year and total allowable catches are not considered appropriate for this form of hunt. In some years catches may exceed 2,000 whales, and in other years they may be much smaller, while the average annual catch since 1971 (1971-96) has been c. 1,400.*

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of i) a single stock across the entire North Atlantic stock, and ii) a discrete, localised stock restricted to Faroese waters, had been ruled out.

The Management Committee further noted the conclusions of the Scientific Committee that the effects of the drive hunt of pilot whales in the Faroe Islands have had a negligible effect on the population, and that an annual catch of 2,000 individuals in the eastern Atlantic corresponds to an exploitation rate of 0.26%.

Based on the comprehensive advice which had now been provided by the Scientific Committee to requests forwarded from the Council, the Management Committee concluded that the drive hunt of pilot whales in the Faroe Islands is sustainable (NAMMCO/7/7).

#### **REFERENCES**

- NAMMCO Annual Report 1995. North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission, Tromsø. 186pp.  
NAMMCO Annual Report 1996. North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission, Tromsø. 227pp.  
NAMMCO/7/6. Scientific Committee. Report of the Fifth Meeting. Tromsø, 10-14 March 1997 (unpublished).