

## REPORT OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Oslo, Norway, 2 September 1998

### 1. – 3. OPENING PROCEDURES

The Chairman of the Management Committee, Einar Lemche, welcomed delegations and observers to the meeting. Participants were as listed in Appendix 1 of the Report of the Council. The agenda, as contained in Appendix 1, was adopted. Documents available to the meeting are listed in Appendix 2. The Secretary agreed to act as rapporteur.

### 4. NATIONAL PROGRESS REPORTS

The Management Committee **noted** that, in accordance with the decision at the last meeting of the Council, National Progress Reports on marine mammal research in member countries submitted to the Scientific Committee were now also available to the Management Committee. Reports from the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Norway for 1997 and for Greenland for 1996 were available to the meeting (see Appendix 2).

In addition, the Management Committee welcomed the information recently received from the Government of Canada in response to the Council's invitation to Canada to provide NAMMCO with information on catch levels and management strategies with respect to shared stocks of marine mammals. The Government of Canada had provided a number of recent documents and reports related to shared stocks which were listed in document NAMMCO/8/MC/6 and which are available to Contracting Parties through the Secretariat.

### 5. REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON BY-CATCH

At its last meeting in 1997, the Management Committee decided to establish a Working Group on By-catch to "consider how the issue of by-catches of marine mammals could be addressed at its next meeting, noting the duties of States under article 61.4 of UNCLOS in this respect." The Working Group met in Oslo on 31 August and was attended by representatives from all member countries. Gísli Víkingsson (Iceland) was elected as Chairman. The Working Group agenda and list of participants are contained in Appendix 3.

The Chairman of the Working Group informed the Management Committee that the Group had decided not to prepare a written report, but had agreed to report to the Management Committee the following points resulting from its deliberations:

- 1) The Working Group studied the definitions, guidelines and rules of by-catch established in other international fora, agreements and other instruments such as UNCLOS, Agenda 21, FAO, ICES and ASCOBANS;
- 2) The Working Group pointed out that establishing the size of by-catch without access to other relevant parameters, such as abundance estimates and replacement yields, is of little help in answering the question of whether by-catch threatens a particular population;
- 3) All NAMMCO member countries have possibilities in their national catch reports or control schemes to have by-catches registered, including by-catch of marine mammals;
- 4) Member countries should assess available information regarding the level of by-catch compared to the status of the stock in question;

- 5) Member countries should inform NAMMCO of developments in regulations for managing or avoiding by-catch and developments in new technology for this purpose;
- 6) The NAMMCO Secretariat should gather information on tests, developments and use of new technology in fishing gear to avoid or reduce by-catch.
- 7) The Working Group recommends that it should meet prior to the next annual meeting of the Management Committee to discuss developments in this field.

The Management Committee **agreed** that the Working Group should meet again prior to the next meeting of the Management Committee. While noting that discussions in the Working Group had so far been of a preliminary nature, it was agreed that further discussion should focus on issues related to points 4 and 5, as suggested by the Working Group, and that additional specific tasks could be forwarded to the Working Group as appropriate.

## 6. PROPOSALS FOR CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

### 6.1 Earlier proposals

The Chairman drew the attention of the meeting to the updated list of proposals for conservation and management decided by NAMMCO since its establishment, as contained in NAMMCO/8/MC/3. (This list of proposals was updated after the Oslo meeting to also include proposals for conservation and management agreed at this meeting, and is contained as such in Appendix 4). The Chairman invited information from Contracting Parties on developments with regard to earlier proposals.

#### *Atlantic walrus*

With respect to the proposal for conservation and management of Atlantic walrus agreed in 1995 (see Appendix 4, point 2), Greenland provided the Management Committee with information on further measures recently implemented through legislation by the Greenland authorities for the conservation of the West Greenland stock. These regulations include: the restriction of walrus hunting to people with valid professional hunting licences only; a year-round ban on walrus hunting south of 66BN; limitations on the means of transport used in connection with walrus hunting to dog sleds and vessels of 19.99 GRT/31.99 GT or less: the sale of walrus products limited to direct sales at open markets or for personal use only. Municipal authorities now also have the possibility of implementing further restrictions if circumstances require.

### 6.2 New proposals

#### 6.2.1 *Advice from the Scientific Committee*

##### *i) Central North Atlantic minke whales*

The Management Committee **accepted** that for the Central Stock Area the minke whales are close to their carrying capacity and that removals and catches of 292 animals per year (corresponding to a mean of the catches between 1980-1984) are sustainable. The Management Committee noted the conservative nature of the advice from the Scientific Committee (see NAMMCO/8/6, item 8.5).

##### *ii) Harp seals in the Northwest Atlantic*

The Management Committee **noted** that combined estimated catches of harp seals in Canada and Greenland are in the order of 300,000 and that these catches are near, or at, the established replacement yields (see NAMMCO/8/6, item 8.1).

*iii) Hooded seals in the Northwest Atlantic*

The Management Committee **noted** that the total catch of hooded seals in the Northwest Atlantic in 1996 slightly exceeded the replacement yield while in 1997 the total number of seals taken was much lower (see NAMMCO/8/6, item 8.2).

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

### 7.1 Requests for advice

#### 7.1.1 *Former requests from the Council*

The Chairman drew the attention of the meeting to the updated list of requests for advice (1992-1997) which was available as NAMMCO/8/MC/4.

The Management Committee **noted** that scientific advice on a number of issues forwarded to the Scientific Committee had yet to be finalised due to on-going work in these areas. Of these, the following were noted in particular:

#### *NASS-95*

The Management Committee **agreed** to reiterate its previous recommendation to request the Scientific Committee to continue its work to monitor stock levels and trends in all stocks of marine mammals in the North Atlantic (see *NAMMCO Annual Report 1996*:131-132). In this context the Scientific Committee was encouraged to prioritise 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 (see *NAMMCO Annual Report 1997*: 66).

#### *Harp seals in Greenland Sea and White Sea/Barents Sea and hooded seals in the Greenland Sea*

The Management Committee **noted** that a forthcoming meeting of the Joint ICES/NAFO Working Group on Harp and Hooded Seals would be addressing in particular requests for advice on these stocks. The Management Committee agreed to return to these matters when further information expected to result from this meeting had been reviewed by the Scientific Committee.

#### 7.1.2 *New requests for advice*

##### *Economic aspects of marine mammal-fisheries interactions*

The Management Committee **noted** the Scientific Committee's decision to maintain the Working Group on the Economic Aspects of Marine Mammal-Fisheries Interactions and to seek further guidance on matters of particular interest.

The Management Committee **agreed to recommend** that the Scientific Committee be requested to investigate the following economic aspects of marine mammal – fisheries interactions:

- to identify the most important sources of uncertainty and gaps in knowledge with respect to the economic evaluation of harvesting marine mammals in the different areas;
- to advise on research required to fill such gaps both in terms of refinement of ecological and economical models and collection of basic biological and economical data required as input parameters for the models;
- to discuss specific cases where the state of knowledge may allow quantification of the economic aspects of marine mammal – fisheries interactions:

- a) what could be the economic consequences of a total stop in harp seal exploitation versus different levels of continued sustainable harvest?
- b) what could be the economic consequences of different levels of sustainable harvest vs. no exploitation of minke whales?

*Stock structure of North Atlantic minke whales*

In order to ascertain the stock structure of minke whales in the North Atlantic, the Management Committee **agreed to recommend** that the Scientific Committee be requested to investigate the possibility of supplementing present sampling with existing older material from NAMMCO countries and other countries in joint genetic analyses. If possible, such analyses should be undertaken.

*Fin whales*

The Management Committee **agreed to recommend** that the Scientific Committee be requested to undertake an assessment of the status of fin whales in the North Atlantic based on all available data.

*White-beaked and white-sided dolphins*

The Management Committee has noted that ecological interactions between dolphin species of the *Lagenorhynchus* genus and fisheries have caused concern in NAMMCO countries. The Management Committee therefore **agreed to recommend** that the Scientific Committee be requested to perform an assessment of distribution, stock identity, abundance and ecological interactions of white-beaked and white-sided dolphins in the North Atlantic area.

*Feeding studies of harp and hooded seals*

The Management Committee **agreed to recommend** that the Scientific Committee coordinate joint feeding studies of harp and hooded seals in the Nordic Seas (Iceland, Greenland and Norwegian Seas) and off West Greenland.

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

### **8.1 NAMMCO International Observation Scheme 1998**

The Chairman referred to NAMMCO/8/MC/5, which was a preliminary report by the Secretariat on the implementation of the International Observation Scheme in 1998 under the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme for the Hunting of Marine Mammals.

The Secretary explained that this report had been prepared in accordance with article B.2.5 of the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme. It was, however, noted that the report was of a preliminary nature as one observer was still active in the field at the time of the present meeting.

The Management Committee noted that observation activities in 1998 had involved the following:

*Sealing in Norway*

Land-based observation of seal catches in Norwegian sealing operations conducted in the West Ice and East Ice in the spring of 1998 was carried out in April. A total of three vessels were boarded by a NAMMCO observer in connection with the landing of catches in Tromsø during the period 26 to 28 April 1998. National inspection reports were checked in all cases, and the delivery of catches to the purchaser, Rieber & Co in Tromsø, was also observed. No violations were reported. A final report of observation activities was submitted to the Secretariat.

*Whaling in Norway*

Land-based observation of catches of minke whales by Norwegian vessels was carried out at points of delivery in the Lofoten Islands during the period 2 June to 8 June by a NAMMCO observer. The observer also took part in the course for national whaling inspectors in Bergen on 29 April prior to observation activities. A total of eight whaling vessels were boarded and the whaling logbooks were checked in all cases. On three of the eight vessels, national inspectors were not present when the observer arrived, but the captains of all vessels were present during observation. No violations were reported and a final report of activities was submitted to the Secretariat.

*Whaling and sealing in Greenland*

Land-based observation of whaling and sealing activities in Greenland is presently being carried out. The planned period of observation in Greenland is 27 August to 13 September, based in the Nuuk area with possible additional coverage in other locations, if appropriate, within this period. A final report of activities is expected to be submitted to the Secretariat before the end of September 1998.

In addition to providing an outline of observation activities, the preliminary report to the Management Committee also drew attention to some general matters related to the administration of the Scheme, which had been implemented for the first time in 1998.

With respect to planning, it was noted that the proposal for the scope of activities was developed by the Secretariat and approved by the Management Committee by correspondence on March 25. It was further agreed on 29 April to extend the plan to also include land-based observation of whaling operations in Norway. Two observer candidates were nominated by each member country, no reservations to any candidates were received, and all eight observers were appointed by the Management Committee on March 25. Based on the agreed proposal for scope, the Secretariat then developed specific plans for observation activities (as outlined above) in accordance with budgeted funds for these activities in 1998, and drawing on three of the eight appointed observers.

The Secretary noted that experiences so far in 1998 in implementing the Scheme revealed a number of administrative matters related to, for example, reporting, salaries and other rates, as well as deadlines for planning, for which the Secretariat requires further guidance and direction from the Management Committee. The Management Committee noted the recommendation of the Secretary that these matters be considered in more detail before the implementation of the Scheme in 1999.

## 8.2 NAMMCO International Observation Scheme 1999

With respect to the implementation of the Observation Scheme in 1999, the Chairman noted that according to paragraph 14 of the Guidelines to the Observation Scheme - "By October each year, the Secretariat develops a proposal for the Management Committee for the scope and range of observation activities during the following year in accordance with budgeted funds for these activities. The Management Committee shall approve this proposal and appoint the observers by 1 January".

On the basis of comments from delegations, the Management Committee **agreed** as a starting point that pilot whaling activities in the Faroe Islands should be included in a general proposal for the scope of the Scheme in 1999, and that consideration should also be given to the possibility of on-board observation in other areas.

### **8.3 Working Group on Inspection and Observation**

The Management Committee **agreed** to reactivate the Working Group on Inspection and Observation and Egil Ole Øen (Norway) agreed to resume chairmanship of the Working Group. Noting points raised under 8.1 and 8.2 above, the Management Committee **instructed** the Working Group to meet again prior to 1 December 1998 in order to review in detail the implementation of the Observation Scheme in 1998 and to review a proposal for the scope and range of observation activities in 1999, as well as to examine other practical and administrative matters requiring further consideration and development, and to propose any amendments to the administrative guidelines to the Scheme which may be necessary.

## **9. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

### **9.1 Election of Chairman**

Kaj Mortensen (Faroe Islands) was elected Chairman of the Management Committee for the next two years.

### **9.2 Election of Vice-Chairman**

Halvard P. Johansen (Norway) was elected as Vice-Chairman of the Management Committee for the next two years.

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Arnór Halldórsson (Iceland) on behalf of all members of the Management Committee, expressed his gratitude and appreciation to Einar Lemche for his efficient handling of the business of the Committee during the two consecutive terms in which he had held the office of Chairman.

## **11. ADOPTION OF REPORT**

A draft report of the meeting, containing all matters of substance agreed by the Management Committee, was reviewed and approved during the meeting. The final edition of the report was prepared after the meeting and adopted by correspondence.

## AGENDA

1. Chairman's opening remarks
2. Adoption of agenda
3. Appointment of rapporteur
4. National Progress Reports
5. Report of the Working Group on By-catch
6. Proposals for conservation and management
  - 6.1 Earlier proposals
  - 6.2 New proposals
    - 6.2.1 Advice from the Scientific Committee
    - 6.2.2 Other proposals
7. Recommendations for scientific research
  - 7.1 Recommendations from the Scientific Committee
  - 7.2 Other recommendations
    - 7.2.1 Former requests from the Council
    - 7.2.2 New recommendations from Member Countries
  - 7.3 Establishment of drafting group for scientific recommendations
8. Implementation of the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme
  - 8.1 NAMMCO International Observation Scheme 1998
  - 8.2 NAMMCO International Observation Scheme 1999
  - 8.3 Working Group on Inspection and Observation
  - 8.4 Other matters
9. Election of officers
  - 9.1 Election of Chairman
  - 9.2 Election of Vice-Chairman
10. Any other business
11. Adoption of report

## LIST OF DOCUMENTS

NAMMCO/8/MC/1	List of documents
NAMMCO/8/MC/2	Agenda
NAMMCO/8/MC/3	List of proposals for conservation and management (up to and including NAMMCO/7)
NAMMCO/8/MC/4	Requests for scientific advice – 1992-1997
NAMMCO/8/MC/5	Preliminary report on implementation of the NAMMCO International Observation Scheme under the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme for the Hunting of Marine Mammals
NAMMCO/8/MC/6	Information on marine mammal research and management provided by the Government of Canada
<u>National Progress Reports</u>	
NAMMCO/SC/6/NPR-F	Faroe Islands - Progress Report on Marine Mammal Research in 1997
NAMMCO/SC/6/NPR-G	Greenland - Progress Report on Marine Mammal Research in 1996
NAMMCO/SC/6/NPR-I	Iceland - Progress Report on Marine Mammal Research in 1997
NAMMCO/SC/6/NPR-N	Norway - Progress Report on Marine Mammal Research in 1997
<u>Council documents:</u>	
NAMMCO/8/6	Report of the Scientific Committee, 1-5 March 1998
NAMMCO/8/8	Report of the ICES Advisory Committee on Fishery Management on Harp and Hooded Seals (advice from ICES to NAMMCO's request).
NAMMCO/CS/1998	Provisions of the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme for the Hunting of Marine Mammals (as adopted by the Council of NAMMCO at its Sixth Meeting in Tromsø, Norway, March 1996)



## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP ON BY-CATCH

Oslo, Norway, 31 August 1998

### AGENDA

1. Election of Chairman
2. Adoption of agenda
3. Apointment of rapporteur
4. Defintions & standards related to By-catch
  - 4.1 International conservation standards and legal instruments (UNCLOS, FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries etc)
  - 4.2 National conservation and management policies and regulations – e.g. extent and nature of legislation related to by-catch of marine mammals
5. Management approaches to by-catch
6. Evaluating the problem - Availability of data on by-catch for use in stock assessments
7. Development of technical measures for reducing/avoiding by-catch
8. Utilization of by-catch – Unwanted or untargeted?
9. Addressing by-catch issues through NAMMCO
10. Adoption of report

### PARTICIPANTS

#### Faroe Islands

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#### Greenland

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#### Iceland

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