



INTRODUCTION

The overall aim of the hunt is to kill the animal instantaneously or as quick as possible in a manner that maximizes 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 in 1998 an International Observation Scheme whereby observers monitor hunting activities in member countries on an annual basis. Each year a different hunt is chosen randomly to be observed.

The purpose is to provide a mechanism to monitor the conduct and regulation of marine mammal hunting activities, to ensure international transparency in whaling and sealing operations in the region. NAMMCO observation is two-fold: 1) observing whether member countries implement the national inspection scheme they have committed to (in other words do they correctly fulfil their own inspection) and 2) observing whether there is compliance with the hunting regulations. The observer scheme also facilitates possibilities for the recording and collection of reliable data on struck-and-lost animals.

1. FAROE ISLANDS

Whale hunting is subject to detailed regulations laid down by the Faroese Parliament and the Ministry of Fisheries. Seal hunting is not governed by any special legislation¹.

1.1 Whales

Long-finned pilot whale, white-sided dolphin, white-backed dolphin and bottlenose dolphin are the four cetacean species that can be hunted in the Faroe Islands as drive hunts. In addition, it is permitted to shoot harbour porpoise with shotguns loaded with pellets cartridges. This hunt is carried out using boats.

When a school of pilot whales or other small whales, except harbour porpoise, is sighted the district administrator must be notified. The district administrator, in consultation with the whaling foreman, decides into which whaling bay the school shall be driven, following currents. A whaling bay must fulfil certain criteria and there are presently 23 authorised whaling bays in the Faroes. Once the decision on location is made, the boats form in a semi-circle behind the whales and 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 the killing.

The actual killing method has changed very little throughout history. The whale is secured 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 10 degrees backward. With a single thrust followed by sideways movements the spinal cord and the

¹ Parliamentary Act No 56 of 19 May 2015 on pilot whales and other small whales, most recently amended by Parliamentary Act No 44 of 6 May 2016, Executive order No 100 of 5 July 2015 on pilot whale drive.