

## FAROE ISLANDS PROGRESS REPORT ON MARINE MAMMALS 2017

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### I. INTRODUCTION

This report summarises research on cetaceans and pinnipeds conducted in the Faroe Islands in 2017, by the Museum of Natural History and the Environment Agency.

### II. RESEARCH BY SPECIES 2017

#### II.a Species/Stocks studied

- Grey seal (*Himantura grypus*) – hunting statistics
- Pilot whale (*Globicephala melas*) – landed animals, abundance
- Northern bottlenose whale (*Hyperoodon ampullatus*) – abundance

#### II.b Field work

In 2017, biological samples, for age, reproduction and diet, were collected from a total of 559 **pilot whales** by the Natural History Museum – Bø on 21 May (82 samples), Tórshavn on 16 June (131), Hvalvík on 26 June (114), Tjørnuvík on 29 June (43), Hvannasund on 5 July (68), Hvannasund on 17 July (18), Tórshavn on 18 August (61) and Hvannasund on 29 August (42). This is a continuation of a small-scale sampling programme, with the plan to complement with a more comprehensive monitoring programme.

In 2017, the Environment Agency took samples of **pilot whales** in connection with grinds in Tórshavn 16 June, in Hvalvík 26 June, in Tjørnuvík 29 June and in Tórshavn 18 August. In all, 93 individual samples of muscle and blubber, and liver and kidney tissue samples were taken.

#### II.c Laboratory work

The biological material collected from **pilot whales** in 2017 has been prepared ready for finalizing the analysis of age, diet and reproduction.

The Environment Agency are regularly collecting **pilot whale** samples for a tissue bank, where the aim is to take samples from three schools a year, with generally 25 individuals from each. In addition to a monitoring program as outlined in Table 1, research activities are done as projects and when funding allows. Such projects could be to investigate the presence of chemicals of emerging environmental concerns and elucidate potential negative impact of pollutants on pilot whales are undertaken. In 2017, samples of pilot whales were included in a Nordic Council of Ministers supported study of new per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances, as arranged and coordinated by the Nordic Screening group, see also [www.nordicSCREENING.org](http://www.nordicSCREENING.org). The results will