

NAMMCO



THE 25th MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

REPORT

5 - 6 APRIL 2017, Nuuk, Greenland

@ North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission

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1. OPENING PROCEDURES

1.1 Welcome address

The meeting was opened with a welcome address by the acting Chair and Vice-Chair of Council, Amalie Jessen (Appendix 4). She conveyed the apologies of the Chair of the Council, Ásta Einarisdóttir, who was not able to attend the meeting as well as her best wishes for the meeting and the celebration of NAMMCO 25-year jubilee.

Twenty-five years after the 9th April 1992, the acting Chair welcomed all the participants back to Greenland and Nuuk to the 25th meeting of the Council and the celebration of 25-year of cooperation on whaling and sealing and on an eco-system approach to marine resources management.

She recalled that many driving forces had been behind the NAC MOU and the inception of NAMMCO. She evoked the valuable contribution of Einar Lemche (Greenland), Halvard P. Johansen (Norway), Gudmundur Eiriksson (Iceland) and Kjartan Hoydal (Faroe Islands), the first chair of NAMMCO who sadly passed away in May 2016. Hoydal was a strong advocate for the sustainable use of all marine resources and a sound scientific based management.

She noted that in 1992 at the signing of the agreement, the Council expressed its sincere hope that Canada and Russia would join the Commission and that today the invitation still stands. She noted with pleasure the interest expressed by Nunavut and its large delegation attending the meeting this year.

She recalled the progress accomplished during these 25 years, including the increasing scope of the work of the Scientific Committee and the establishment of a very active Committee on Hunting Methods.

She wished that NAMMCO continues to advance in the knowledge of the North Atlantic ecosystem and the role of marine mammals in this system. The capacity of NAMMCO as a regional and international science-based management organization should be enhanced to the benefit of all North Atlantic peoples, communities and marine mammals. She underlined the necessity for NAMMCO to discuss which steps it should take in the next 5-10 years.

She looked forward to the discussions the coming days and welcomed the Parties agreement to make a common declaration (NAMMCO/25/30) for celebrating this milestone of the organization.

1.2 Admission of Observers

The Chair welcomed all observers, noting representatives from Canada, Japan, the Government of Nunavut, Nunavut wildlife Management Board, the International Whaling Commission (IWC), Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., the IWC World Conservation Trust and Livelihoods International (LIVIN), the most recent accredited as observer to NAMMCO.

Regrets had been received from Denmark, the Russian Federation and the EU (DG Mare and DG Environment).

1.3 Opening statements

A welcome and opening statement was delivered by the Greenlandic Minister for Fisheries and Hunting, Mr Hans Enoksen.

Member nations Faroe Islands, Iceland and Norway as well as Canada, Japan, the IWC and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. also presented opening statements, and IWC & LIVIN delivered a joint one. All statements are contained in Appendix 4.

1.4 Adoption of agenda

The agenda (NAMMCO/25/02) was adopted without amendments (Appendix 2). An update from Japan on their whale research programme in the North Pacific, NEWREP-NP, was scheduled under point 16. The list of documents relating to the agenda items is listed in Appendix 3.

1.5 Meeting arrangements

The General Secretary, Geneviève Desportes, joined the Chair in welcoming all participants to the 25th meeting of the Council and presented the meeting arrangement and practicalities. She drew attention to the structural changes brought to the programme and the presentation of “Sealers” a new Norwegian documentary on the 2015 sealing season of one of the few active Norwegian sealing vessels.

1.6 Invited speakers

The Chair noted that the 25th anniversary represented a good opportunity to look both at the past and ahead, at NAMMCO's accomplishments and perspectives. Two speakers had been invited to talk about one important focus of NAMMCO's work, hunting and the improvement of hunting methods, bringing two different perspectives, that of the hunters and the veterinarian. A summary of these presentations is provided in Appendix 4.

Mr Anton Egede, a whale hunter (fin, minke and humpback whales) from West Greenland, presented the hunters experiences of the changes that had taken place in the management of marine mammals during these 25 years. His presentation “Whaling in West Greenland – then and now” underlined the visible effect that climate change was already having on the availability of marine mammals to the hunters. Egede also mentioned the culture clash he experiences between whalers and the tourist industry in Nuuk area and the fact that the town has inhabitants from other countries with other views on whaling.

Dr Egil Ole Øen, through his presentation “Animal welfare in the execution of hunting – a key to public acceptance of whaling and sealing” reported on the work that had been carried out to improve hunting methods during the 25 years of NAMMCO. He described the substantial improvements in animal welfare, e.g. reduced time to death, and hunters' safety.

Both presentations were very well received. In the following discussion Egede and Øen both underlined that although substantial improvements had been achieved in hunting methods, hunting conditions were changing due to climate change, and they emphasised the continued importance for NAMMCO to address these changes.

Comments:

The Parties expressed their gratitude to Øen, standing down after having served the organisation since 1992, for his long contribution. He has been a driving force in NAMMCO's work related to hunting and killing methods, and his dedication and knowledge has resulted in substantial improvements. Øen was commended for his warm and strong personality, as well as for the enthusiasm and humour he brought with him to the organisation.

On behalf of the Parties, the Chair extended her gratitude to Prof. Lars Walløe, who also has stepped down. Walløe closely followed the development of NAMMCO, he was an eminent member of the Scientific Committee between 2003 and 2016 and its Chair in 2004-2006.

1.7 Launching of NAMMCO's new website

The Chair noted that the jubilee was a very appropriate time for launching the new NAMMCO website and gave the floor to the Deputy Secretary, Charlotte Winsnes. Winsnes explained the background and the choices behind the website and guided the participants through the main parts of the site. The new site encompasses a large amount of information on the organization, the status of marine mammal stocks and many related issues, it had represented an intensive and dedicated workload for the Secretariat. Many other people had been involved, not the least the Company Røst Kommunikasjon (Tromsø) responsible for the design and implementation.

Comments:

The site, and the work of the Secretariat, was highly complimented by the Parties and participants. The Faroe Islands expressed the importance the new site will have in facilitating and supporting the work of the NAMMCO community and internal communication. It will also support and enhance transparency and represent an excellent platform for engaging with external communities.

2. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

2.1 Report of the Finance and Administration Committee

The Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC), Jóannes V. Hansen (Faroe Islands), presented the activities of the committee since NAMMCO 24 (NAMMCO/25/04).

The main subjects dealt with and of relevance to Council were:

- The streamlining, clarification and aligning of NAMMCO Rules of Procedures (RoP) (Council and Committees), regarding the confidentiality of documents.
- Defining rules for the attendance of external expert at meetings of committees' subsidiary bodies.
- Preparing a proposal for a Performance Review Process.
- Enhancing NAMMCO visibility, with three main axes of development.
- The elaboration of a Communication and Outreach Strategy (COS).
- The elaboration of a Communication Plan for the years 2017-2018.
- Developing proposals for events at international fora.
- Developing an internship programme at the Secretariat.
- The accounting for 2016, and the preparation of budget 2017 and draft budget 2018.

FAC provided the following advice to Council:

- Approve the 2016 Accounts, endorse the 2017 Budget and approve the 2018 draft budget.
- Adopt the amendments made to the RoPs proposed by FAC related to the confidentiality of meeting documents.
- Adopt the Communication and Outreach Strategy (COS) developed by FAC.
- Adopt the process developed by FAC for a Performance Review of NAMMCO.
- Endorse the continued prioritisation given by FAC to the finalisation, then the continual update of the new website, and its use as a hub of all NAMMCO information, communication and outreach activities, both internally and externally.
- Take note of the Communication Plan (CP) developed for 2017-2018 and approve the new deadline for providing National Progress Report by Parties, March 1 for the precedent calendar year, so the content can be actively used in communication activities and particularly for the website.
- Endorse the establishment of a new Working Group "WG on By-catch, Entanglement and Live Strandings" for dealing with non-hunting related welfare issues as a subsidiary body under Council, agree with its scope (welfare issues related to bycatch, entanglement, and live strandings affecting marine mammals) and adopt the Terms of Reference proposed (see Item 5.2).
- Endorse the recommendation of FAC regarding the attendance and funding of External Experts at meetings of committees' subsidiary bodies:
 - *To enhance transparency and openness, External Experts should participate in all meetings of committees' subsidiary bodies dealing with non-administrative questions.*
 - *By External Experts is understood any relevant experts who are not a member of the Parent Committee organising the meeting and not involved in the data collection / analysis / interpretation of the work to be discussed, regardless of nationality and institution.*
 - *The participation of External Expert may be funded by NAMMCO.*
 - *As a rule, each NAMMCO member country is responsible for bringing the information necessary to fulfil the terms of reference of any subsidiary body.*

Comments:

The Chair of Council thanked Hansen for his presentation and invited comments to the report. Council

endorsed all recommendations from the FAC. Council asked Parties to take note of the new deadline for submitting the Annual National Progress Report, now March 1 for the precedent year. Norway thanked the chair of FAC and the Secretariat for providing good working conditions that, had allowed progress in many areas and a large amount of work to be accomplished.

2.1.1 Audited accounts 2016

The Deputy Secretary presented the accounts 2016 (NAMMCO/25/05; Appendix 6). The 2016 accounts had closed with a surplus of NOK 358,671. The auditors' report had been received without comments and the accounts had been reviewed by FAC without issues.

Comments:

The 2016 accounts were **approved** by Council.

2.1.2 Communication and Outreach Strategy

At its 24th Annual Meeting, Council endorsed the idea of NAMMCO having a Communication and Outreach Strategy (COS) and tasked the FAC to continue developing such strategy on the basis of document (NAMMCO/24/25) with the goal of adopting it at this meeting.

Hansen presented the COS (NAMMCO/25/20), developed in cooperation with the journalist Stine Leth-Nissen. The COS defined vision, mission, goals and key messages as well as target audience, channels, prioritisation and actions, resources and responsibilities.

Comments:

Norway welcomed the COS, which represented a very useful systematic approach to future communication and supported the prioritisation of the website as NAMMCO's communication hub, both for internal and external communication.

Iceland joined in welcoming the COS which will increase the transparency and the visibility of the organisation and represents an important step.

Council commended and **adopted** the Communication and Outreach Strategy (COS). Council endorsed the continued prioritisation given by FAC to the finalisation, then the continual update of the new website, and its use as a hub of all NAMMCO information, communication and outreach activities, both internally and externally. Council also endorsed the priority given by FAC to a significantly increased communication and outreach effort and its financial implications.

The Chair Jessen thanked the General Secretary for her work in the elaboration of the COS.

IWMC and LIVIN made the following statement:

Communicating the achievements of resources-use oriented organizations is a difficult task. NAMMCO's management achievements would be easier to explain to the media and public at large, if human factors are incorporated. At CITES CoP17, the Sustainable Use forces were successful with the media campaigns by modifying their messages. As an answer to the anti-use/trade community saying "Let us save the wild species", they say "Let's take care of people so that they can conserve wild species". This resulted in massive press coverage to the advantage of sustainable use. NAMMCO would have great advantage in using the same communication strategy and would benefit from charismatic medium to convey the message, such as Mr Egede, who at the Opening Ceremony, spoke with his heart. IWMC-LIVIN also believes that adding the cultural dimension would benefit the strategy. It is too often forgotten that food security refers not only to the physical food but as well to the cultural one. As it is said in one of the documents prepared by the Secretariat Marine Mammals, feeding our Northern body and soul.

In conclusion, IWMC-LIVIN strongly encouraged NAMMCO to implement its Communication Strategy for the benefit of the Nordic cultures and traditions and for the benefit of marine mammal resources of the North Atlantic. A win-win situation.

2.1.3 Performance Review

At its 24th Annual Meeting, Council endorsed the idea of conducting a performance review (PR) of NAMMCO and tasked the FAC with developing a proposal, with the goal of adopting it at this meeting.

Hansen presented the proposal (NAMMCO/25/22), which follows the FAO recommendations for performance reviews of RFMOs (FAO 2015). It includes the Objectives of the Review, Terms of Reference, selection of the Review Panel, procedures and the list of assessment criteria adapted from the list recommended by FAO. Hansen noted that a PR allows an organisation to get an external critical view of its work and elicits constructive comments, new ideas and suggestions for improvements. It also supported transparency and openness. Hansen noted that FAC highly recommended that the review panel be in majority constituted by external and non-national experts to ensure full objectivity and neutrality and recommended that FAO, IWC, and NAFO be asked to nominate each one expert to the panel and noted that the three organisations had responded positively to informal inquiries.

Comments:

Iceland noted that many RFMOs are going through their second PR. The process was very valuable to make sure that the organisations serve its purpose in the best possible way.

Norway also was very positive and considered that the organisation had now reached the point where a PR was feasible and profitable and such a step should be taken.

Council **adopted** the proposed PR process and was looking very much forward to the nomination of the panel experts and the completion of the PR. It recommended that the conclusions of the PR be presented by the Chair of the panel review, if feasible at its next meeting.

2.1.4 Amendments to Rules of Procedures (RoP)

Noting that issues with the publication and confidentiality of the documents and reports of subsidiary bodies were not clear and aligned in the present RoPs, FAC proposed some changes. The General Secretary presented the changes proposed to the RoP of the Council, which were cascaded in the RoP of the different committees, except for the Finance and Administration Committee (NAMMCO/25/14-17). The substantial change was that, generally, the report of subsidiary bodies (including working group and workshops) would now be made public four weeks after their release to the Parent Committee and Council. The Committee on Hunting Methods had furthermore recommended changes pertaining to Membership and Terms of Reference (See also Item 5.1). A few minor linguistic changes had also been proposed by Iceland to clarify wordings.

Comments:

Council **adopted** all the changes proposed. Iceland noted that it had also been decided to add at the beginning of the report of any subsidiary bodies a standard sentence stipulating that the content of the report was reflecting the opinion of the subsidiary body and not automatically those of the parent committee or Council.

2.1.5 Budget 2017 and draft Budget 2018

The Deputy Secretary introduced the 2017 budget and draft budget for 2018 (NAMMCO/25/06).

Comments:

Council **endorsed** the prioritisation proposed by the FAC as depicted in the budgets, and **endorsed** the 2017 budget 2017 and **approved** the 2018 draft budget.

2.1.6 Other business

There was no other business.

3. NATIONAL PROGRESS REPORTS

National Progress Reports (NPR) had been received from member countries (NAMMCO/25/NPR-F, NAMMCO/25/NPR-G, NAMMCO/25/NPR-I, NAMMCO/25/NPR-N). National Progress reports were also received from the observer countries Canada, Japan, and the Russian Federation, all of whom were thanked for their contributions.

Comments:

No further comments were made.

4. SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

4.1 Report of the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the Scientific Committee (SC), Tore Haug (NO), presented the report (NAMMCO/25/07). He focussed on the general parts of the Scientific Committee report, as the species-specific sections, the Ecosystem Approach issues, including the Disturbance Symposium, climate change, and marine mammal-fisheries interaction, had been reported to the Management Committees (NAMMCO/25/08-10).

4.1.1 Overall work in 2016-2017

Four Working Groups (WG) had met in 2016: the By-catch WG, the Coastal Seals WG, the ICES/NAFO/NAMMCO WG on harp and hooded seals (WGHARP), and the Abundance Estimates WG (NAMMCO/25/07, NAMMCO/25/08-10).

4.1.2 Cooperation with other organisations

The SC has close ties with several organisations. Members of the SC had participated to the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), and the CAFF Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (CBMP) Marine annual meeting, thus contributing to the State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report (SAMBR). The ICES/NAFO WG on Harp and Hooded seal had now become an ICES/NAFO/NAMMCO WG, with the first joint meeting held in September 2016. Following up on the decision of NAMMCO 24, an invitation to an enhanced scientific cooperation had been forwarded to the MoP8 of ASCOBANS (Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans in the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas - see also under point 14.1). The SC saw a joint symposium on harbour porpoises as a logical step for this increased cooperation.

4.1.3 Proposed workplan for 2017-2018

The Large Whale Assessment WG (January, Chair: Lars Walløe, Oslo University, NO), the NAMMCO/JCNB Joint WG (March, NAMMCO Chair: Rod Hobs, NOAA, USA) and the Global Review of Monodontids (March, Chair: Rod Hobbs) had already taken place in 2017. The conclusions of the Large Whale WG on fin and minke whales (NAMMCO/25/28) were reviewed at an intersessional meeting of the SC and presented to the Management Committee on Cetaceans (NAMMCO/25/09). The reports of the NAMMCO/JCNB JWG and the Global Review of Monodontids would be presented to the SC at its next meeting (November 2017). The former would also to be presented to the JCNB at its next meeting in 2018.

One WG, a cetacean survey workshop and the meeting of the Scientific Committee were still to happen in 2017 as described below.

Bycatch WG (2-4 May 2017, Copenhagen)

Chair: Kimberly Murray (NOAA, USA), Convenor: Geneviève Desportes.

Invited participants: Marjorie Lyssikatos (NOAA, USA) and Simon Northridge (SMRU, UK).

Terms of Reference of the meeting:

- Review the Norwegian harbour and grey seals and harbour porpoise by-catch data and estimates;
- Review the Icelandic lump sucker and cod gillnet fishery by-catch data and estimates;
- Review the situation in the Faroese mid-water trawling - precise fleet description, by-catch risk and reporting; methods for improving the situation;
- Review the information from Greenland on reporting of by-catch for all species.

Survey Workshop at SMM 2017

The SC was organising a survey workshop in conjunction with the bi-annual conference of the Society for Marine Mammalogy in 2017 (SC/23/15) and in collaboration with Hammond (EU/SCANS-III), Lawson (Canada) and Palka (USA). The aim of the Workshop was to gather scientists involved in cetacean surveys in 2015 and 2016 from the NAMMCO countries, EU (SCANS-III), Canada, and the USA to discuss 1) the possibility of combining abundance estimates from the various cetacean surveys for the whole North Atlantic

and 2) changes in abundance and distribution of cetaceans across the North Atlantic. The Organising Committee consisted of Guldborg Hansen (Greenland), Øien (Norway), Víkingsson (Iceland), Mikkelsen (Faroes) and Prewitt (Secretariat). Participation would be by invitation only.

Scientific Committee 2017 Meeting

The SC had scheduled its next annual meeting, hosted by Iceland, in the 3rd week of November 2017.

Haug also presented the list of working group meetings recommended by the SC for informing its answers to the current requests for advice from Council.

- Walrus WG
- ICES/NAFO/NAMMCO WGHARP
- Coastal seal WG
- Bearded seal WG
- Abundance Estimates WG
- Harbour porpoise WG
- Pilot whale WG.

4.1.4 Other business

There was no other business.

Comments to 4.1:

The Council noted the report and thanked the SC Chair and members for their work. Council agreed with the proposed work plan pending time and budget considerations.

4.2. Adoption of priorities and work plan for the SC in 2017-2019

Council agreed on the plan for the remaining meetings in 2017 described under 4.1.3. In addition, Council agreed to the following schedule for WG's in 2018 and 2019.

2018	2019
Abundance Estimates WG ICES/NAFO/NAMMCO WGHARP Harbour porpoise WG Walrus WG	Coastal seal WG Bearded seal WG Pilot whale WG.

4.3 Other business

There was no other business.

5. COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS

5.1 Report of the Committee on Hunting Methods

The chair of the Committee on Hunting Methods (CHM), Nette Levermann (Greenland), presented the activities of the committee since Council 24 (NAMMCO/25/11, Section 1.2).

The Committee had been presented with revised and new executive orders (FO, GL), as well as quotas, catches, number of active vessels, hunting periods, strandings and any irregularities in whaling and sealing activities. Greenland had organised for wildlife officers and whalers/fishermen a three-day entanglement response training course in July 2016, led by the coordinator of the IWC Global Whale Entanglement Response Network, David Mattila. Upon recommendation from the 2015 Expert Group on Time to Death (TTD), Iceland had held a course for minke whale hunters in 2016 and planned to complete TTD measurement in the 2017 minke whale hunt.

The Committee provided advice to FAC on guidelines for release of meeting reports and attendance and funding of external experts and recommended that its Rules of Procedure regarding Membership and Terms

of Reference be modified (see Item 2.1.4). It also provided advice on how best to deal with the animal welfare concerns in relation to by-catch, entanglements and strandings – see Item 5.2.1 below.

The CHM was engaged in a discussion on alternative ways of collecting TTD data.

The CHM discussed Struck and Lost (S&L) in the different hunts, both with regards to rates, causes, reduction and data collection. It concluded that the collection of S&L data for large whales were reliable and that the big challenge lies in small whale and seal hunts. The Committee pointed out that there might be a need for reviewing regulations for those hunts where S&L are thought to be high.

The CHM concurred with the conclusion of the SC, that the best method for collecting S&L data was using observers for each types of hunts, but that this would be logistically challenging and costly.

In an effort of minimising S&L rates, CHM had developed a document for informing hunters with practical guidance for reducing rates in the different hunts, including illustrations of best target points. The document will be translated into the NAMMCO languages and will be available on the NAMMCO webpage.

The present Chair, Nette Levermann (Greenland) had finished her term and Guðni M. Eiríksson (Iceland) had been elected new Chair.

Comments:

Council noted the report and thanked the Committee and the outgoing Chair for their work.

5.2 Recommendations arising from the Committee

5.2.1 Proposal for a new committee on non-hunting related welfare issues

With regards to animal welfare concerns related to by-catch, entanglements and strandings, the CHM recommended to Council to establish a new committee. It also strongly recommended not to limit the ToR of the committee to issues specifically related to by-catch, entanglements and strandings, but to make them general to non-hunting related welfare issues and able to encompass situations not foreseen today. Upon request from FAC, the Committee had also drawn Rules of Procedure for this new committee (NAMMCO/25/11, Section 1.2).

Comments:

Council took note of the report and thanked the CHM for its advice. Council decided to follow the recommendation of FAC regarding non-hunting related welfare issues and to establish a Working Group directly under Council to deal with animal welfare issues solely related to by-catch, entanglements and live strandings. The name of the WG shall be NAMMCO WG on By-catch, Entanglement and Live strandings. Council furthermore agreed to the following terms of reference, as proposed by FAC:

- 1. The Working Group shall upon request from the Council or individual member countries, provide advice on welfare issues related to bycatch, entanglement, and live strandings, affecting marine mammals. The Working Group shall ensure that such advice is based on the best available scientific findings, technological developments and traditional knowledge, with due consideration given to safety requirements for humans.*
 - 2. Members of the Working Group may raise specific questions for discussion during meetings of the Working Group. The Working Group may make proposals to the Council for specific tasks to undertake within its terms of reference.*
 - 3. Non-member governments with observer status in NAMMCO may request advice from the Working Group through the Council.*
- The Committee may seek outside expertise if it considers this necessary and appropriate. The WG will nominate its Chair in agreement with FAC.*

5.3. Other business

Greenland informed that they had funded the production of special disentanglement equipment sets, like the sets provided at the disentanglement course – one set for each wildlife officer's vessels and hereby

management region. Greenland had also commissioned an animation video on the handling of the penthrite Whale grenade-99. Both were available at the meeting.

Japan thanked Egil Ole Øen for his contribution to the improvement on hunting methods and reiterated their continued interest in cooperating with NAMMCO on the issues pertaining to killing and hunting methods. Japan also informed that they had followed up on the recommendations for improvements issued by NAMMCO regarding their hunts.

6. THE JOINT NAMMCO CONTROL SCHEME

6.1 Report of the Committee on Inspection and Observation

The Chair of the Committee on Inspection and Observation (CIO), Ulla S. Wang (Faroe Islands) presented the report (NAMMCO/25/12 and Section 1.3).

The Committee had discussed the observation activities carried out in 2016 and those planned for 2017 (see Items 6.2 and 6.3 respectively). Members of the Committee also reported on the national control effort, monitoring type and data collection.

Ulla S. Wang (Faroe Islands) had been re-elected as Chair for another two-year term and Hild Ynnesdal (Norway) as Vice-Chair.

Comments:

Council noted the report and congratulated the Chair and Vice-Chair for their renewed office.

6.2 Observation scheme in 2016

The Deputy Secretary presented the 2016 observation activities (NAMMCO/25/13), which had Norwegian minke whaling as scope.

There were 16 active whaling vessels and two observers followed each one vessel. In total 20 whale hunts were observed of which 18 whales were landed and two were struck and lost. Both struck and lost whales were hit in the optimal target area and were considered dead on impact. In both instances the line broke so that the whales sank and could not be retrieved. No violations were reported.

Comments

Council took note of the report.

6.3 Observation scheme planned for 2017

Document NAMMCO/25/14 contained the plans for the Observation scheme in 2017.

Council had approved by correspondence the observer candidates for 2017 and the scope and range by correspondence. The scope was whaling in Iceland, with two observers and a budget of NOK 100 000 (See also NAMMCO/25/06).

Comments:

Council took note of the report.

6.4 Other business

There was no other business.

7. JOINT MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

7.1 Report of the Joint Meeting of the Management Committees

The Chair of the Joint Meeting of the Management Committees (JMC), Guðni M. Eiríksson (Iceland), presented the report (NAMMCO/25/08 and Section 2).

Ecosystem Approach

Disturbances

The JMC received an update on the Disturbance Symposium and noted that the requests for advice from Council (R-2.6.3, R-3.4.9) which were the impetus for the Disturbance Symposium had now been answered as far as possible with the current available information. The requests will remain ongoing.

Council at NAMMCO 24 had forwarded a new request for advice from the SC (R-1.5.3) to monitor the development of the Mary River Baffinland project, a Canadian iron-ore mining project, and assess qualitatively or if possible quantitatively the likely impact and consequences on marine mammals in the area. The SC had tasked the JCNB-NAMMCO JWG to review this issue and identified the information which needed to be available to this purpose.

Canada provided an update on the project. Baffinland provided in February 2016 a further amendment to the Phase 2 project, of which the key components now include ice breaking, transshipping, the construction of a second ore dock and addition of a rail line constructed parallel to the existing Tote Road. The Nunavut Impact Review Board had, however, not yet received the revised proposal so no substantiated assessment had begun. It is assumed that Baffinland will likely optimize the open water season and thus not pursue year-round shipping.

Climate change

Climate change-related changes were observed in the summer diet of hooded and harp seals in the Greenland Sea and the migration pattern of young harp seal in the White and Barents Sea. A long planned Joint Norwegian-Russian Research Program on Harp Seal Ecology had finally received funding and will start in 2018. The comparison between this study and similar studies performed in the 1990s, when the ice cover was considerably larger, will inform on the effect of Climate change and receding ice.

Marine mammal – fisheries interaction

Several requests relate to this agenda item, some of which may be outdated (R-1.1.5, R-1.1.8, R-1.2.1, R-1.2) and the JMC will review these at the next meeting.

Council at NAMMCO 24 had forwarded a new request for advice from the SC (R-1.4.7) to review the results of the MAREFRAME ecosystem management project. The project will hold its final meeting in 2017 and the SC will review the results at its meeting in 2018.

By-catch

The JCM had endorsed the recommendation for research and proposals for conservation and management to member countries made by the By-Catch WG and listed under Item 12.

The US import rules created a new situation and the JMC noted that by-catch issues will be a focus and priority for managers for the next 5 years and this would be reflected in the working schedule of the Scientific Committee. Iceland, Greenland and Norway explained that they had given only very preliminary data in their report to the US due to the short time frame.

Greenland further informed they had initiated several initiatives to improve the reporting of by-catch. Among them, a new executive order makes reporting of by-catch mandatory in all fisheries, with also the buyers (and not only the fisherman) having to report by-catch information.

Procedures for decision making on conservation and management measures

Struck and lost (S&L)

Council at NAMMCO 24 had forwarded a new request for advice from the SC and CHM (R-1.6.4) Council requested the SC and the CHM to provide advice on the best methods for collection of the desired statistics on losses.

Both Committees had agreed that the best method for collecting S&L data was to have observers in the different types of hunts, as S&L rates vary between species and hunts. This would be logistically challenging and costly and better S&L rate data may therefore not be a priority parameter for improving assessments.

Greenland had reiterated its request that all future quota advice deal with S&L animals in the same way.

Catch validation

Catch validation has been brought up by the SC at several occasions, and Jessen and Levermann gave a presentation at the SC/23 meeting in Nuuk to explain the validation process in Greenland. The SC considered unreliable a catch validation based in part on hunters being asked to remember catches, months and sometimes years later. Validation should be made shortly after the catches were reported, and a shorter reporting period may provide more accurate and reliable catch numbers.

Increased user knowledge in management decision -making

The Government of Greenland includes the use of locally-based documentation of living resources as a key tool for improving Arctic resource management. For seven years, with funding from the EU, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Government, the PISUNA programme (Opening doors to native knowledge), has established and tested locally-based documentation of resources in different communities. These are now funded and implemented in some communities.

Besides improving the capacity and opportunities of communities in monitoring and sustainably managing resources, PISUNA has given a greater 'voice' to Community members in decision-making for resources that are fundamental for their livelihood. This has improved the communication and understanding between users and managers.

The PISUNA-net Local Observations database (<https://eloka-arctic.org/pisuna-net/>) is a searchable, web-based database with real-time data and observations and recommendations from the community members. The Government therefore gets access to both scientists' and local communities' reports, and both are thus used for informing its management decision.

There were no new requests for advice from the SC to the Council.

Comments:

Council took note of the report from the joint meeting of the Management Committees and commended the PISUNA project.

Council noted that in relation to the discussion on By-Catch, the NAMMCO Parties had confirmed that they would provide to the By-Catch WG the required information and update in time for its meeting in May 2017.

7.2 Other business

There was no other business.

8. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR CETACEANS

8.1 Report of the Management Committee for Cetaceans

The Chair of the Management Committee for Cetaceans (MCC), Ulla S. Wang (Faroe Islands), presented the report (NAMMCO/25/09 and Section 2).

The MCC had received an update on the status of analyses from data collected during NASS 2015. It noted that the pilot whale estimate was not available yet, although this was a target species, and recommended it be finalised as soon as possible. It was presented with the plans for future analyses, a new NAMMCO Scientific Publications volume on 2015 NASS results and a workshop at the Society for Marine Mammalogy conference in October.

The MCC was also presented with updates on past requests for advice from the SC and their status were discussed. There were no new requests for advice on cetaceans from the SC to the Council.

Past proposals for conservation and management were also discussed. The MCC endorsed the Proposals for Conservation and Management, and Recommendations for Research listed under Item 12, including three advices on sustainable catch limits for whales given by the SC for Iceland:

- The catch limit of 161 fin whales in the WI area and 48 in EI/F area (based on application of the RMP to the EG+WI+EI/F region) is safe and precautionary, and that this advice should be considered valid for a maximum of 8 years (2018 to 2025),
- An annual catch of 360 minke whales is a lower bound for the sustainable catch for the Central North Atlantic medium area,
- An advice of (annual) catch levels of 217 common minke whales from the CIC sub-area.

Nette Levermann (Greenland) was elected as chair of the MCC and Norway as Vice-Chair. The MCC thanked Ulla S. Wang (Faroe Islands) for her good work during the past four meetings.

Comments:

Council noted the deliberations of the Committee on species and stocks of cetaceans and the three new advices provided to Iceland on catch limit.

8.2 Other business

There was no other business.

9. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR SEALS AND WALRUSES

9.1 Report of the Management Committee for Seals and Walrus

The Chair of the Management Committee for Seals and Walruses (MCSW), Guðni M. Eiríksson (Iceland), presented the report (NAMMCO/25/10 and Section 2), highlighting the main recommendations and requests for advice from the Scientific Committee.

The Committee noted that there were new abundance estimates for the Greenland Sea harp seal population, the White Sea/Barents Sea harp seal population, the total grey seal population in Norway and Iceland, and the harbour seal population in Norway.

The Committee endorsed the recommendations for research and proposals for conservation and management to member countries recommended by the SC and listed under Item 12.

The MCSW recommended that two new requests for advice related to all stocks of walrus in Greenland be forwarded to the SC.

Walrus request

The SC is requested to provide assessments of, and advice on sustainable removals from, all stocks of walrus in Greenland covering the period from 2019 to 2023, with the advice for Qaanaaq starting in 2021.

Greenland requests that struck and loss rates are subtracted from any future advice on sustainable removals in Greenland, with the advice being given as total allowable landings.

Comments:

Council noted the deliberations of the Committee on species and stocks of seals and walruses, the several recommendations to member countries for research and proposals for conservation and management and the two new requests for advice from the SC (listed under Item 11).

Greenland underlined that although the request related to Struck and lost was generated under the agenda item on walrus, it was a general request for all species.

9.2 Update on the EU sealskin ban and Inuit exemption

Greenland informed that the negative effects of the EU ban on seal products and the 2015 revision has been detrimental to many communities in Greenland. The 2015 revision was one more example illustrating the lack

of respect for the facts and realities of communities depending on wildlife resources. The Government was still trying to adjust its sealing industry and had decided to continue its subsidy.

The regulation considers commercial activities and marketing related to seal products as being negative a priori and something that should be banned without any consideration to sustainability. It shows a political acceptance that discarding the utilisation of a resource (e.g., skins) is preferable to generating revenues in areas where they are limited. This is in strong contradiction with the principles of bio-economy and particularly blue bio-economy that the both the EU and the Nordic countries are presently focusing on.

After repeated requests from Denmark/Greenland on its information obligation, the EU Commission had produced a web page that informs about the regulation. The same information had been circulated to embassies. The EU Commission had, however, announced that no separate information campaign on the sealskin regime would be made.

The sealskin industry was presently developing a labelling information scheme for all Inuit seal products accepted by the EU Commission, with a QR code connecting to an EU website stating that the products was of Inuit origin and thereby their trade authorised by the EU. The website would also include references to the EU seal regime.

The EU Commission must every four years report on the implementation of the regulation, assessing its functioning, efficiency and fulfilment. The first report must be presented to the European Parliament and the Council by 31 December 2019.

Comment:

Council noted the information.

9.3 Any other business

There was no other business.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS & ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT

Last year Greenland expressed its concern about the increased shipping activity in the Arctic and the disturbance to marine mammals this may cause. It remained particularly concerned about the development of project such as the Mary River Iron Ore project on Northern Baffin Island (Item 7.1 and the JMC report in Section 2), and by ice breaking through pack ice areas like Baffin Bay and the Greenland Sea because of the pristine environment that hosts large number of marine mammals.

In the light of the climate and environment changes taking place, the Faroe Islands, supported by all Parties, proposed to forward a new request for advice to the Scientific Committee:

Committed to furthering its ecosystem approach to the management of marine mammals, and recognising the range of anthropogenic pressures facing North Atlantic marine mammals associated with the climate and environmental changes taking place, the Council requests the SC to advise on the best process to investigate the effects of non-hunting related anthropogenic stressors on marine mammal populations, including the cumulative impacts of global warming, by-catch, pollution and disturbance.

11. ADOPTION OF NEW REQUESTS FOR ADVICE FROM THE COUNCIL

The Scientific Secretary, Jill Prewitt, presented the list of new requests for advice to the Scientific Committee (NAMMCO/25/26), which had been proposed by the Management Committees and Parties.

Walrus

R-2.6.7 - The SC is requested to provide assessments of, and advice on sustainable removals from, all stocks of walrus in Greenland covering the period from 2019 to 2023, with the advice for Qaanaaq starting in 2021.

Management Procedures

R-1.6.5 - Greenland requests that struck and loss rates are subtracted from future advice on sustainable removals in Greenland, with the advice being given as total allowable landings.

Environmental Issues

R-1.5.4 - Committed to furthering its ecosystem approach to the management of marine mammals, and recognising the range of anthropogenic pressures facing North Atlantic marine mammals associated with the climate and environmental changes taking place, the Council requests the SC to advise on the best process to investigate the effects of non-hunting related anthropogenic stressors on marine mammal populations, including the cumulative impacts of global warming, by-catch, pollution and disturbance.

Comments:

Council **adopted** these three new Request for Advice to the NAMMCO Scientific Committee.

Norway commended particularly the adoption of Request R-1.5.4 on non-hunting related anthropogenic stressors. It represented good progress that the Scientific Committee could now take on the task of also considering more directly the impact of non-hunting related stressors. It enlarged the work scope of the Scientific Committee and supports NAMMCO's ecosystem approach to the management of marine mammals.

12. NEW PROPOSALS FOR CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

The Deputy Secretary presented for information the list of new proposals for Conservation and Management (NAMMCO/25/27) formulated by the Management Committees (Appendix 9).

The list includes proposals directly related to the management of stocks, such as quota advice. It also includes recommendations for research and data collection necessary to the Scientific Committee for elaborating or consolidating its management advice and therefore better informing future management.

Comments:

Council noted the quota advices and recommendations for research.

Iceland commented that some of the research recommendation had already been followed, since they emanated from WG meetings which happened several months earlier, and should be removed from the list. A specific example was the recommendation for a harbour seal survey in Iceland, recommended in March 2016 and which had been carried out in summer 2016. It was however agreed that such proposals should remain on the list until the results have been communicated to and endorsed by the Scientific Committee.

13. MARINE MAMMAL AS FOOD RESOURCES

The Ministerial Meeting in 2012 had emphasised the importance of an increased focus on marine mammals as a food resource. A Planning Group, established at NAMMCO 21, decided upon two main parts in the project, a) the production of a background document reviewing and compiling existing material relevant to the topic, and b) the development of a strategy for communicating the message to different target audience.

The Chair of the Planning Group, Amalie Jessen, presented the report of the Planning Group (NAMMCO/25/18). Since NAMMCO 24, progress achieved were four-folded

- The background document titled "Marine Mammals: A Multifaceted Resource" had been finalised and was available to the meeting (NAMMCO/25/23ab).
- The Group had developed a communication strategy, in cooperation with the journalist S. Leth-Nissen, encompassing different outreach activities, also targeting kids and youth.
- A leaflet addressing different aspects of marine mammal as food resources, "No food – or?", had been developed (NAMMCO/25/24) and distributed at several events.
- A Breakout Session "Sustainable marine resources: a piece of the Blue Economy puzzle in the Arctic?", with four presentations and a panel discussion had been organised at the 2016 Arctic Circle Assembly (See NAMMCO/25/19 for further details).

The background document was available on the NAMMCO website and had been used to create some of the posts. The Greenland Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting had translated part of the document to post it on its own website. The summary document (NAMMCO/25/23b) had been sent together with the NAMMCO Press Release announcing the Council 25 meeting.

The Planning Group considered the document as a very valuable and comprehensive tool, a white paper touching upon most aspects of the issue at hand.

Comments:

Council took note of the report and the planned developments and commended the progress made.

Greenland thanked the Secretariat for the work it had put in finalising the background document and the General Secretary as the driving force behind the project. The Council noted that it represented a very useful and valuable tool not only for the NAMMCO countries but for all the Arctic regions.

IWMC and LIVIN complimented the background documents and announced their intention to give more detailed comments at a later stage. IWMC regretted that a previous title “Marine Mammals, feeding our Northern body and soul” had been abandoned, as it clearly illustrated that food security not only refer to the material aspect of food but also to its cultural aspect.

14. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

14.1 Cooperation with international organisations

The General Secretary introduced NAMMCO/25/19, which presented summaries of observer reports from the Secretariat’s attendance at meetings of observed organisations as well as four conferences. The former included meetings of the AC-SDWG Arctic Human Health Expert Group (with presentation of NAMMCO), the IWC Whale Killing Method Sub Committee (with presentation of the Report of the 2015 NAMMCO TTD Expert Workshop) and the IWC 66th Commission meeting (with an OS and interventions), the ASCOBANS MOP8 (with an OS and interventions) and the CAFF Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (CBMP) Marine Annual Meeting, with contribution to the State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report (SAMBR), a major 2017 CAFF deliverable.

In addition, the Secretariat attended the PAME/CAFF/AMAP Conference on Ecosystem Approach to Management (with a presentation: “Benefits of Ecosystem Based Management for Marine Mammals”), the ECS 30th Annual Meeting and two related workshops (with a presentation: “By-catch situation in Europe in relation to the European legislative framework”), the NordBio closing Conference Minding the future – Bioeconomic in a changing Nordic reality and the Arctic Circle Assembly (with the organisation of a Breakout session: “Sustainable marine resources: a piece of the Blue Economy puzzle in the Arctic?”).

Following up on the NAMMCO 24 decision to strengthening its scientific cooperation with other organisations, the NAMMCO Opening Statement delivered at ASCOBANS MOP8 conveyed an invitation “to enhance the scientific cooperation between the two organisations to the benefits of small cetacean conservation. Three issues of shared concerns come to mind: by-catch monitoring, estimation and mitigation; the assessment of North Sea harbour porpoises, a shared stock between NAMMCO and ASCOBANS; and the monitoring of the effect of persistent organic pollutants on marine top predators.”

NAMMCO was also represented at the NEAFC 35th Annual Meeting, the NAFO 38th Annual Meeting and the NASCO 33st Annual Meeting.

Comments:

The Chair thanked the Secretariat for its active role and good work in outreach and representation and encouraged it to continue. She underlined the importance for NAMMCO of being a transparent and visible body.

14.2 Other business

There was no other business.

15. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

The Chair noted with satisfaction that a lot of communication and outreach activities had taken place since the last Council meeting, with NAMMCO active on Facebook, a breakout session at the Arctic Circle (Reykjavík), a presentation at Arctic Frontiers (Tromsø), new flyers, and finally the launching of the new website with a discussion blog.

The General Secretary presented the Communication Plan (CP), which had been formulated for the next two years (NAMMCO/25/21) in the framework of the Communication and Outreach Strategy (COS, NAMMCO/25/20 and point 2.1.2).

She noted that the COS provided an overarching framework for NAMMCO's communication and outreach work and addressed long-term communication objectives and overarching messages. Building on the COS, the CP represented its first leg of implementation< it detailed key messages and outlined and prioritised communication and outreach activities for 2017-18, including activities related to the jubilee.

Council commended the development of the 2017-2018 CP and noted that it was quite ambitious. It reiterated its full support to the work and activity of the Secretariat within the communication domain. Council commended and acknowledged the leading role of the General Secretary in taking the initiative and developing the COS and CP and the inspiring support brought by the journalist Leth-Nissen. It was looking forward to the implementation of the CP.

15.1 Website

The Chair noted that the opening of a new, and more advanced and user-friendly website and the completion of the stock status list were points of priority on the Communication Plan and that this was well in progress.

The Secretariat had received lots of compliments from people having visited the new website since it had been launched.

The Deputy Secretary emphasised that the new website was still a work in progress and that some adjustments needed to be done. Comments from visitors would also be taken into consideration for optimising the site. She urged the meeting participants to be active visitors and indicate any problems encountered. The stock status information for hunted species will be completed by the end of the year and then the other species present in the NAMMCO area added.

The General Secretary reminded the participants that the NAMMCO community had been asked to send portraits to be uploaded on the website and Facebook to mark the 25-year jubilee by focussing on the people behind the organisation. She underlined also that to be lively, the website needed to be "active", but that this depended very much on the NAMMCO community sharing news, articles, pictures and videos. Council's attention was drawn to the fact that the website needed to be a common effort and to the importance of receiving input and information from the NAMMCO community.

Comments:

Council applauded the result and commended again the work, effort and creativity put into the new website, as well as the quality of the text. It reiterated also the need for and commitment to keeping the website constantly updated, particularly the stock status section.

15.2 Social Media

The NAMMCO Facebook page (NAMMCO/25/29) contained both internal information (related to NAMMCO events, meetings, projects, new assessments, activities) and external news (generated by other bodies and related to marine mammals, conservation-related issues, release of reports, conference announcements).

The General Secretary underlined that the constituency of the Facebook site grows according to the activity of its own community. It opened in November 2015 and had 462 followers by February 2017. It was important to help boosting the size of the network, thereby rendering the publishing effort more valued.

Comments:

Council noted the increased activities on the Facebook site and hoped that the new website and Facebook could work together for increasing traffic on both sites and therefore the visibility of the organisation.

The Faroes and Greenland commended the Secretariat for its activity on the Facebook and reiterated the need for the NAMMCO community to also be active.

15.3 Flyers

The Secretariat had developed two new flyers since the last Council meeting (NAMMCO/25/24). One was prepared in the framework of the Marine Mammal as Food Resources project (see under Item 13). The second flyer celebrated the 25th anniversary of NAMMCO and described the reasons for its inception, some of its achievements and its coming challenges. It also set the focus on 5 of the faces behind NAMMCO 92, K. Hoydal, A. Jessen, J. Sigurjónsson, E.O. Øen and K. Sanderson.

Comments:

Council praised the leaflet celebrating the jubilee and the initiative of continuing focusing on the people behind NAMMCO during the jubilee year on social media.

15.4 Scientific Publications

The Scientific Secretary summarised the activities in the online publications. All volumes were accessible on the journal website. The journal was indexed and easy to find during a bibliography search and the journal website (<http://septentrio.uit.no/index.php/NAMMCO/SP/index>) was well visited from all over the world from Australia and New Zealand to USA and Canada. The volume 10 on Age estimation of marine mammals with a focus on monodontids had 9 papers and two workshop reports published online as “online early versions”. Some papers were still missing, but the volume should be completed by the end of the year.

The next volume would be a cetacean survey volume containing the new abundance results from NASS2015-16, as well as results from surveys in areas adjacent to the NAMMCO area (Europe, Canada and USA), but also previously unpublished T-NASS papers. The editors were Pike, Guldborg Hansen and Desportes and 19 papers had been invited to join, of which 10 were committed.

Comments:

The Council noted the update.

15.5 Other business

There was no other business.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Japan made the following statement:

As mentioned in Japan’s Opening Statement, Japan submitted a new research proposal “New Scientific Whale Research Program in the North Pacific - NEWREP-NP” (NAMMCO/25/Info01) to the IWC Scientific Committee (IWC-SC). The research program will be finalized, taking into account the comments and recommendations which will be provided at the upcoming IWC-SC in Slovenia in May. Japan wishes to initiate NEWREP-NP at the earliest convenience, preferably this year.

Japan cordially asks NAMMCO Members to collaborate with Japan at the upcoming IWC-SC to help dealing with the NEWREP-NP proposal in a truly scientific manner. Japan believes that the value of the objectives of NEWREP-NP, namely establishing sustainable catch quota for minke and sei whale in the North Pacific, could be shared and appreciated by NAMMCO Members in a spirit of enhancing sustainable use of marine living resources. Japan will welcome and appreciate active participation of scientists from NAMMCO Members in the discussion at IWC-SC in Bled, Slovenia.

Furthermore, for a long time IWC Members have been unable and unwilling to address the fundamental issue of the different views on whales and whaling, which eventually make IWC dysfunctional. As everybody here

can easily recognize, alleviating such abnormal situation requires all IWC Members to start a real dialogue on this fundamental issue.

At the last IWC Commission meeting, Japan proposed to initiate such dialogue among IWC Members and requested the establishment of a working group, namely WG Way Forward. Japan sincerely wishes to proceed with this initiative under the leadership of the current IWC Chair, Dr Joji Morishita, and Japan cordially requests the active cooperation of NAMMCO Members.

Comments:

The Chair thanked Japan for the information given on the New Japanese Research Programme in the North Pacific and the comments provided.

IWMC made the following statement:

The 18th-Century English poet Samuel Johnson once observed that "The future is purchased by the present." Indeed, the NAMMCO philosophy embodies a significant investment in our common future.

What we have done here in the last few days is vital to restoring reason and prudence in conserving the world's resources, as well as the preservation of culture. But of course, it is not what we do here, it is what we accomplish after we leave that becomes our legacy.

This challenge and opportunity transcends international boundaries and is vital to our future. NAMMCO must pursue its mission "to make others understand that mankind is not in conflict with nature", but can achieve abundance and prosperity through the exercise of intelligence and principles of sustainable use. This challenge and opportunity transcends international boundaries and is vital to our future. But more important than identifying and discussing problems is building understanding and co-operation, and fostering the innovation and political will necessary to solve them. This is the test that awaits NAMMCO.

Despite the formidable hurdles that lie ahead, we have Nature on our side. "True wisdom consists of not departing from nature, but moulding our conduct according to her laws and model," said Roman philosopher Seneca.

Comments:

The Chair thanked IWMC for its statement and its continuous support to the sustainable use of resources.

17. CLOSING ARRANGEMENTS

In celebration of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Organisation, the Parties **agreed to the NUUK Declaration** (Appendix 8), reaffirming their determination in ensuring the sustainable and responsible use of marine mammals and therefore their commitment to enhance their cooperation regarding marine mammal research, conservation, and management and the improvement of hunting methods.

17.1 Election of Officers

The outgoing Chair, Ásta Einarisdóttir was thanked by Greenland on behalf of the Council for her able chairing of NAMMCO during two terms and all the participants joined for wishing her a speedy recovery. Iceland thanked Amalie Jessen (Greenland) for chairing the meeting and for her good leadership and proposed her as the new Chair. Norway proposed Jóannes V. Hansen (Faroe Islands) as vice-Chair. Both accepted and were applauded by the participants.

17.2 Press Release

A press release, summarising the main achievement of NAMMCO and the main decisions and recommendations of the 2017 Annual Council Meeting, as contained in Appendix 7, was adopted.

17.3 Next meeting and closing of meeting

The next meeting will be hosted by the Secretariat in Norway at a venue to be determined.

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The Faroe Islands thanked Greenland for its hospitality and excellent facilities. Faroes also thanked the acting Chair, Amalie Jessen, and the Secretariat for their work, as well as all the participants. Norway and Iceland also thanked Greenland for a successful meeting and Jessen for her able chairing. The Council thanked the Secretariat for their dedicated support.

Jessen noted that Greenland was very pleased to host the meeting celebrating the 25-year Jubilee of the organisation, especially when the agreement had also been signed in Greenland in Nuuk. She thanked all the participants and particularly the Minister for Fisheries and Hunting, Mr Hans Enoksen, and the hunters. She again noted with appreciation the participation of the large delegation from Nunavut.

Jessen looked very much forward to work with everyone. She noted that this year represented a milestone in NAMMCO's history and many accomplishments had been realised in various domains during these 25 first years. Still much remained to be done, especially in communicating the NAMMCO message. Nonetheless, the work accomplished by the Scientific Committee, the Committee on Hunting Methods and the Committee on Inspection and Observation proved that the organisation was fulfilling its aim.

The Report of the 25th Council Meeting of NAMMCO was adopted by correspondence on June 2, 2017.

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APPENDIX 2 – AGENDA

1. OPENING PROCEDURES

- 1.1. Welcome address
- 1.2. Admission of Observers
- 1.3. Opening statements
- 1.4. Adoption of agenda
- 1.5. Meeting arrangements
- 1.6. Invited speakers' presentation: 25 years of NAMMCO from a veterinarian and hunter perspectives
- 1.7. Launching of NAMMCO's new website

2. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

- 2.1. Report of the Finance and Administration Committee
 - 2.1.1. Audited accounts 2016
 - 2.1.2. Communication and Outreach Strategy
 - 2.1.3. Performance review
 - 2.1.4. Amendments to Rules of Procedures
 - 2.1.5. Budget 2017 and Draft Budget 2018
- 2.2. Other business

3. NATIONAL PROGRESS REPORTS

4. SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

- 4.1. Report of the Scientific Committee
 - 4.1.1. Overall work in 2016
 - 4.1.2. Cooperation with other organisations
 - 4.1.3. Proposed workplan for 2017-2018
 - 4.1.4. Other business
- 4.2. Adoption of priorities and work plan for the SC in 2017-2018
- 4.3. Other business

5. COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS

- 5.1. Report of the Committee on Hunting Methods
- 5.2. Recommendations arising from the Committee
 - 5.2.1. Proposal for a new committee on non-hunting-related welfare issues
- 5.3. Other Business

6. THE JOINT NAMMCO CONTROL SCHEME

- 6.1. Report of the Committee on Inspection and Observation
- 6.2. Observation scheme in 2016
- 6.3. Observation scheme planned for 2017
- 6.4. Other business

7. JOINT MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

- 7.1. Report of the Joint Meeting of the Management Committees
- 7.2. Other business

8. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR CETACEANS

- 8.1. Report of the Management Committee for Cetaceans
- 8.2. Other business

9. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR SEALS AND WALRUSES

- 9.1. Report of the Management Committee for Seals and Walrus
- 9.2. Update on EU seal ban and Inuit exemption
- 9.3. Other business

10. ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS & ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT

11. ADOPTION OF NEW REQUESTS FOR ADVICE FROM THE COUNCIL

12. NEW PROPOSALS FOR CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

13. MARINE MAMMALS AS FOOD RESOURCES

14. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

- 14.1. Cooperation with international organisations
- 14.2. Other business

15. INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

- 15.1. NAMMCO website
- 15.2. Social Media
- 15.3. Flyers
- 15.4. Scientific Publications
- 15.5. Other business

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

17. CLOSING ARRANGEMENTS

- 17.1. Election of Officers
- 17.2. Press release
- 17.3. Next meeting

APPENDIX 3 – LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Doc Reference	Title	Agenda item
NAMMCO/25/01	List of Participants	1.2
NAMMCO/25/02	Agenda	1.4
NAMMCO/25/03	List of Documents	All
NAMMCO/25/04	Report of the Finance and Administration Committee	2.1
NAMMCO/25/05	Audited accounts 2016	2.1.1
NAMMCO/25/06	Budget 2017 and draft budget 2018	2.1.6
NAMMCO/25/07	Report of the Scientific Committee	4
NAMMCO/25/08	Report of the Joint Meeting of the Management Committees	7.1
NAMMCO/25/09	Report of the Management Committee for Cetaceans	8.1
NAMMCO/25/10	Report of the Management Committee for Seals and Walrus	9.1
NAMMCO/25/11	Report of the Committee on Hunting Methods	5.1 & 5.2
NAMMCO/25/12	Report of the Committee on Inspection and Observation	6.1
NAMMCO/25/13	Report of the NAMMCO observation scheme 2016 season and plans for 2017 season	6.2 & 6.3
NAMMCO/25/14	Proposed amendments to the RoP for the Council	2.1.4
NAMMCO/25/15	Proposed amendments to the RoP for the Management Committees and Committee on Inspection and Observation	2.1.4
NAMMCO/25/16	Proposed amendments to the RoP for the Scientific Committee	2.1.4
NAMMCO/25/17	Proposed amendments to the RoP for the Committee on Hunting Methods	2.1.4
NAMMCO/25/18	Report from the Marine Mammal as Food Resources Project	13
NAMMCO/25/19	Observers' report	14
NAMMCO/25/20	Proposed Communication and Outreach Strategy	2.1.2
NAMMCO/25/21	Proposed Communication Plan	15
NAMMCO/25/22	Proposed Performance Review	2.1.3
NAMMCO/25/23	Marine mammals: a multifaceted resource	13
NAMMCO/25/24	NAMMCO flyers, <i>No Food or?</i> and <i>NAMMCO 25, Faces behind NAMMCO 92</i> .	15.3
NAMMCO/25/25	Press Release	17.2
NAMMCO/25/26	List of new Request for Advice to the Scientific Committee	11
NAMMCO/25/27	New Proposals for Conservation and Management	12
NAMMCO/25/28	Report of the intersessional SC meeting, 2 March 2017	4
NAMMCO/25/29	Summary of Facebook activities	15.2
NAMMCO/25/30	Nuuk Declaration	17
NAMMCO/25/NPR-F	National Progress Report Faroe Islands	3
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NAMMCO/25/NPR-I	National Progress Report Iceland	3
NAMMCO/25/NPR-N	National Progress Report Norway	3
NAMMCO/25/NPR-C	National Progress Report Canada	3
NAMMCO/25/NPR-J	National Progress Report Japan - compilation	3
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NAMMCO/25/Info-01	NEWREP-NP Japan – proposal for new research programme	

APPENDIX 4 – OPENING STATEMENTS AND WELCOME ADDRESS

WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL

Inuugujok Ministers, Delegates, Observers and Guests,

I am very pleased to open the 25th Annual Meeting of NAMMCO here in Nuuk. We are celebrating 25 years of cooperation on whaling, sealing and walrus hunting, including an eco-system approach to management of marine resources.

Our Chair, Asta Einarsdottir, sends her very best for the meeting, and regrets that she is not able to open and attend the meeting. I am sure that all the participants will join together to sign a postcard to Asta to wish her all the best and that we are looking forward to her return to NAMMCO.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Head of Delegations and everyone in the Secretariat for preparing the meeting and the staff in my office to organize the facilities, the reception on Tuesday and the host dinner on Wednesday.

I welcome the NAMMCO Secretariat to Nuuk. The energy and enthusiasm can be felt and seen by the numbers of emails with many documents and hard work from you. From 2nd of January till today I have received around 200 emails.

I would also like to mention one of the driving forces to establish NAMMCO, the former head of delegation Mr Einar Lemche. He was my mentor, and he represented a capacity, not only in negotiations on wildlife, but also fisheries and he performed negotiations with a professionalism that I would like to have today. He is now retired and living in Denmark, and I sometimes consult him on complicated issues. Let me also remember Halvard P. Johansen (Norway) and Gudmundur Eiricsson (Iceland) and many others driving forces in NAMMCO.

In May last year, we received sad news when we heard about the passing away of our dear friend and the first NAMMCO Chair and the first chair of the Management Committee Kjartan Hoydal. Kjartan Hoydal was also one of the major driving forces behind the NAC MOU, the NAMMCO Agreement and a strong advocate for a sound scientific based work and for the sustainable use of all marine resources. NAMMCO sent condolences to his family.

Looking back

Years have gone nearly without noting the time. I remember sitting here in the very same hotel, attending the Ministers signing the NAMMCO Agreement in 1992. It was a very important and significant step for regional management of marine mammals.

The Council expressed its sincere hope that Canada and Russia would join the Commission in the "not-too-distant future." Today, the invitation stands still.

I also remember the first NAC meeting I participated in in Reykjavik 1990. The same year, I participated for the first time at the IWC Commission meeting in Nordwijk in Netherland. I remember the amount of paper and the time used to discuss whether to resume whaling or not. I also remember the huge number of people demonstrating against the whaling and a delegation member being attacked by some of the demonstrators.

At the first NAC meeting I mostly remember the expressions of hope and the enthusiasm to gain results. I also remember the exceptional reception held by Kristjan Loftsson in Hvalur 7 or 9, with all the delicious whale meat and blubber dishes we were offered, and also the number of bottles consumed by the whalers and others and were impressed that people came in time to the meetings next morning.

It was also in the early years of NAMMCO, where a couple of "tørfiske parties" and eskimo dances were performed by Egil Ole and Kristjan in the evenings after the serious meetings. NAMMCO people were

socializing with each other. One of the strengths within NAMMCO is the large continuity in the stake-holders, who worked seriously but also remembered to have a nice time.

I also attend the Inaugural meeting of the Council in Tórshavn in September the same year. In Tórshavn we decided to establish a Secretariat in Tromsø with an initial annual budget of 2 million DKK to cover activities related to administration, information and scientific cooperation. Today we have a budget of more than 5 million NOK.

The Council also agreed to working procedures for its Scientific Committee, and decided it should review the basis for, and develop assessments necessary to provide the scientific foundation for the conservation and management of the stocks relevant for management under NAMMCO. Today, NAMMCO has on its website information on 23 species of marine mammals with the biology, conservation status, management, and research. Thanks to a coordinated work from the Secretariat and scientists.

At the same meeting the Council agreed to establish an ad hoc Committee on Hunting Methods, chaired by me. The Committee on Hunting Methods was later formalized and is one of the most active Committees in NAMMCO, and has provided the organisation with constructive and practical approaches in its work with improving hunting methods.

At the Inaugural meeting, we also agreed to establish cooperation with a number of international organisations and to form information strategies. Looking into the external relations NAMMCO has a broad network and working relations worldwide, which have lead to the acknowledgement and respect for NAMMCOs work today.

The report in 1992 was on 35 pages and some of the text was written in hand ☺ The Annual Report 2015 is on 305 pages contending many electronic deliveries.

Looking to the future:

I have a vision that NAMMCO continues to consolidate and develop its foundation and advancing scientific knowledge of the North Atlantic marine ecosystem as a whole, and to understanding better the role of marine mammals in this system.

As Chair and with the other Head of Delegations, we will be committed to finding ways to enhance the capacity of NAMMCO as a regional and international science-based management organisation. I will therefore reiterate my invitation last year to the Council to discuss which steps NAMMCO should take in the next 5-10 years. Only by dialogue, communication and enhancing the cooperation, can we enlargen the capacity, to the benefit of all North Atlantic peoples, communities and marine mammals.

Ministers. Member Countries, Delegates, Observer Governments, Organisations and the Secretariat. I am looking forward to the next days with you all, and to the exiting presentations and discussions we will have. With these words, it is therefore my great pleasure to welcome you all to this 25th Annual Meeting and Celebration of NAMMCO.

Qujanaq – Thank you.

FAROE ISLANDS – OPENING STATEMENT

Madam Chair, Delegates, Observers, ladies and gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to be here in Nuuk for the 25th Annual Meeting of NAMMCO.

During these 25 years NAMMCO has managed to establish itself as the most important platform for managing marine mammal in a sustainable manner in the North Atlantic.

NAMMCO has played an important part in our better understanding of marine mammals, their abundance and how they best should be managed.

As well as this NAMMCO has also played a vital role in improving hunting methods and the enablement of hunter's training, which has significantly improved hunting methods

We would like to thank our Greenlandic host and everyone in the Secretariat for preparing the meeting and making us feel so welcomed. We look forward to work with the General Secretary and all her staff during this meeting.

We in the Faroes regard NAMMCO as a very important organisation in managing marine mammals in the North Atlantic Ocean.

We in the Faroes firmly believe that marine mammals should be managed in a sustainable way and through regional cooperation.

Furthermore, we in the Faroes believe that the management should be based on full transparency and the best available scientific advice. This should happen by sharing information and by the development of the best possible practice.

We in the Faroes believe that NAMMCO fulfils all of these requirements, which therefore places NAMMCO very close to our hearts in the Faroes.

We believe that we should further strengthen the outreach of NAMMCO and promote NAMMCO as a successful organisation managing marine mammals in the North Atlantic.

Madame Chair,

We have a busy week ahead of us and we look forward to be working with all of you in what promises to be yet another good annual meeting.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

GREENLAND – OPENING STATEMENT

Mrs Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

25 years of cooperation on conservation, management and studies of marine mammals

Congratulations on the 25th anniversary of the creation of the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO). It is with great pleasure that Greenland welcomes you to Nuuk on this big occasion. The NAMMCO agreement was signed here in Nuuk on the 9th of April in 1992 by the 4 member parties Faroe Islands, Iceland, Norway and Greenland.

NAMMCO is today a well consolidated collaborative organisation for the conservation, management and scientific-based work on marine mammals in the North Atlantic of which we are proud of. Greenland as always would like to invite to a tighter and more direct cooperation on shared stocks in the North Atlantic and wish to welcome our other neighboring countries, here under Canada/Nunavut to join the NAMMCO Agreement.

Scientific work

The cornerstone of NAMMCO is the scientific work, which is the basis for the management advice to the member countries. It is gratifying that the member countries of NAMMCO through regional cooperation, aim to strengthen and further develop effective conservation and management measures for marine mammals.

For example, scientific advice is available for almost all managed species in Greenland and the decline of local stocks of belugas and walrus have reversed. It has not always been popular among the users with quota introduction and catch limitations, but the regular surveys of the stocks of these species shows that it is going the right way. The result of the advice and management of these species have been successful.

NAMMCO seeks to cooperate with other intergovernmental organisations that have related interests in order to further increase the scientific knowledge, avoid duplication of efforts, and promote public knowledge about marine mammals in relation to conservation and management of the ecosystem.

Greenland is delighted that NAMMCO acts as the coordinating part for an increasing number of major international marine mammal conferences.

Continued work on hunting methods

Greenland also sees fruitful and constructive results in the work of the two technical Committees and wish to emphasise our continued commitment to these important topics.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge

The Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting is always looking for ways to strengthen the involvement of hunters and fishermen and other stakeholders in the documentation and management of the living resources in Greenland. Home Rule Act no. 12 of 29 October 1999 on hunting, and the Executive Orders that regulate the species both under and outside NAMMCO area of interest guarantee the inclusion of local and traditional knowledge.

Our Ministry has always and will continue to work in collecting and including user knowledge in the decision-making processes. The Ministry wishes to put forward it's gratitude to NAMMCO's continued support and interest in Traditional Ecological Knowledge in its work.

Food security

Greenland exists mostly by the sea and from the sea. Marine resources have great cultural and socio-economic significance to each family in the coastal communities. Greenland is therefore dedicated to sustainable development and effective and prudent stewardship and management of our marine food resources. We see the marine resources as a source for solving food security, not only in Greenland, but also worldwide. NAMMCO countries can contribute more to food security.

Website

It must be emphasized that we are proud and satisfied with NAMMCO's new website. The website allows users and the general public in the respective countries to understand not only what NAMMCO stands and works for. By the new website NAMMCO also communicates the newest available scientific knowledge and management advices on marine mammals in the North Atlantic.

I wish you a constructive meeting and I hope you have time to experience Nuuk town.

Thank you for your attention.

NORWAY – OPENING STATEMENT

Madame Chair, Ministers, Delegates, Observers and Guests - Dear friends

First of all: Thank you to Greenland for hosting our meeting, and thank you for a very nice reception yesterday evening - it is a great pleasure to be in beautiful NUUK and in this very nice venue.

It was an important day for Greenlandic society yesterday. I hope that the elections went well and that the result will bring further prosperity and gain for Greenland.

NAMMCO at 25 is a well-established organisation, constructive in its work and forward looking. Norway would like to express its sincere gratitude to all the Parties, and the Secretariat, for contributing to this unique environment of cooperation.

The management of marine mammals represents challenges of various kinds. In NAMMCO we meet these with a solid combination of the best available science and the knowhow of the hunter. This knowledgebase puts NAMMCO in a hands-on position for effective management.

It is Norway's goal to secure and further develop our organisation in this respect.

At this meeting, we are particularly looking forward to making decisions strengthening our work in the fields of by-catch, entanglement and strandings. With NAMMCO's strong composition of competence we believe that we in this way can contribute significantly to prevention and mitigation on animal welfare related issues.

We are likewise happy to see that we now are preparing the ground for broadening the scope of the Scientific Committee in its deliberations of stressors that may have an influence on the marine mammal populations.

The Scientific Committee is doing an excellent and important job and it is therefore very promising that we now are seeing new recruitment to the committee from almost all of the Parties.

A performance review of our organisation has been under preparation for some time and we welcome its adoption at this meeting.

Progress reports have also this year been submitted by Canada, Japan and Russia. This is a sign of strengthening cooperation between our countries that Norway very much welcomes.

I look forward to and wish you all a fruitful meeting.

Thank you.

ICELAND – OPENING STATEMENT

Madam Chair Distinguished Ministers, Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with great pleasure that the Icelandic delegation attends the 25th Annual Meeting of NAMMCO in Nuuk, recalling that the NAMMCO Agreement was signed here in Nuuk on April 9, 1992.

We thank our hosts for the warm welcome to Greenland and also thank the Secretariat for the efficient preparation of the meeting.

Iceland is pleased to see the broad participation at this jubilee meeting and welcomes the distinguished observers and guests from non-NAMMCO member nations. In particular, we would like to welcome the delegation from Nunavut, Canada led by the honourable minister of Environment Mr Joe Savikataaq and extend special thanks to the Mayor of Iqaluit for her efforts in this respect. Iceland values the interest in NAMMCO shown by Canada and other observer countries through the years, and would wholeheartedly support further strengthening of this relationship by these countries becoming full members of NAMMCO.

Looking back at the last 25 years it becomes clear that the foundation of NAMMCO was an important step in the history of cooperation on the conservation, management and study of marine mammals in the North Atlantic. As a founding nation, Iceland has always valued its membership in NAMMCO. The organisation has facilitated close and fruitful cooperation between member countries regarding research and management of these marine resources that are of great importance to us.

Regional management is at the heart of the NAMMCO ideology. While recognising the need for broader international cooperation on wide ranging migratory marine mammals, there is no scientific support for extending assessments beyond the ocean basins of the North Atlantic. This is best exemplified in the IUCN global listing of fin whales as endangered when scientific assessments have shown a healthy status of the species in the North Atlantic.

While NAMMCO does not have a direct management authority it has proven useful for providing member nations with advice on which to base their management decisions.

Sustainability and animal welfare are two key concepts that need to be fulfilled for responsible marine mammal utilization. While the Scientific Committee has the role of evaluating the former the NAMMCO Committees on Hunting Methods and Inspection and Observation have been of utmost importance in addressing the latter. Through the work in these committees and the development of the joint Control Scheme for the Hunting of Marine Mammals NAMMCO is at the forefront internationally when it comes to considerations of animal welfare in relation to utilisation of wild animal populations. No single person has contributed more to this success story than Dr. Egil Ole Öen who is the keynote speaker at this jubilee meeting.

The main basis for Iceland's economic welfare has been sustainable management of all living marine resources, noting that sustainable management of marine mammals is not only important to Iceland but crucial for all NAMMCO member states. During the past 25 years NAMMCO has made an important contribution to the conservation and sustainable management of marine mammals, not least through the work of the Scientific Committee. While the importance of the sustainability of direct utilisation cannot be overemphasized, marine mammal populations are also effected by several other factors that are likely to become more prominent in the work of NAMMCO in the years to come.

Iceland looks forward to a successful meeting of NAMMCO in Greenland.

Thank you.

CANADA – OPENING STATEMENT

Madame Chair, Distinguished delegates, fellow observers.

Canada is pleased to participate as an Observer in this 25th meeting of the NAMMCO Council and would like to take this opportunity to congratulate NAMMCO on its important milestone. Furthermore, we would also like to thank Greenland for hosting this meeting and to the Secretariat for doing such an amazing job yet again in organizing this meeting.

Canada recognises the importance of collaborating with our international partners on science and management of marine mammals and maintaining our close relationship with NAMMCO participants to ensure a coordinated approach to research and conservation.

Canada has subsistence harvests of bowhead whales, beluga, narwhal, walrus and seals which take place in communities in Northern Quebec, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.

Canada continues to work on ensuring that harvests of marine mammals are based on the best available scientific information and traditional knowledge in order to provide long-term social and economic benefit to the small communities throughout these regions.

Canada values NAMMCO's continued role as a provider of strong and impartial science advice on marine mammals and its dedication to the sustainable management of these species.

As you may know, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada has a new Minister, the Honourable Dominic Leblanc who is aware of harvests of marine mammals and its importance to coastal and northern communities.

Canada is of course looking forward to continued bilateral engagement with NAMMCO members within other fora, such as Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wildlife Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Joint Commission on Management of Narwhal and Beluga (JCNB).

We are looking forward to positive discussions over the next two days and continue appreciating the opportunity to join you all for the NAMMCO Council Meeting.

JAPAN – OPENING STATEMENT

At the outset, Japan would like to thank the Government of Greenland for hosting the important meeting of NAMMCO Council with great hospitality. We also thank the NAMMCO Secretariat for its efficient arrangement of the meeting. We recognise that NAMMCO has made great achievements in the conservation and management of marine mammals including cetaceans, and on behalf of the Government of Japan, we would like to extend our heartfelt congratulation to all the NAMMCO members on its 25th Anniversary. We are honored to attend the Council meeting in the Jubilee year and wish to further contribute to discussions as an observer.

Japan and NAMMCO share important agendas for management and conservation of whale resources. One agenda, for example, is science-based management. Japan has been and will continue to be committed to collecting scientific information which contributes to the establishment of safe catch limit for, inter alia, common minke whales and sei whales in the western North Pacific. As you are all aware, Japan submitted a new research proposal (New Scientific Whale Research Program in the North Pacific: NEWREP-NP) to the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission (IWC-SC) in order to collect this scientific information. The research program will be finalised, duly taking into account relevant comments and recommendations to be given, after the review at the upcoming IWC-SC in Slovenia. Japan, in this regard, wishes to further enhance collaboration between Japan and NAMMCO members including its observers and welcomes active participation of scientists from NAMMCO members in the discussion at IWC-SC.

Our common agenda, namely proper conservation and sustainable use of marine mammals, should also be shared broadly with IWC members. Japan recognises that, for a long time, the fundamental differences of views on whales and whaling among the IWC members have hindered the IWC from pursuing the object and purpose of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling. Japan believes that given the existence of different views, mutual respect of such views is essential for the IWC to properly fulfil its role. Unfortunately, however, IWC members have been unable and unwilling to address this fundamental issue. Japan recognises that, in order to alleviate such an abnormal situation, now is the time for us all to start discussing the fundamental issue at the IWC. Unless IWC members sincerely make the efforts to tackle this fundamental issue to find a solution, no progress can be expected in overcoming the stalemate rooted in such fundamentally conflicting views, and the IWC will be in risk as an international organisation.

In this regard, we all know that NAMMCO has already provided us with good examples of how to achieve its object and purpose, and the knowledge and experience of the organisation and its Members here will definitely contribute to the discussion on the fundamental issue at IWC. In this context, Japan would greatly appreciate your active participation in the discussion at IWC.

Finally, Japan is of a strong view that an effective collaboration between Japan and NAMMCO is a vital force to promote conservation and sustainable use of marine mammals in international fora. Japan is willing to exchange views on every issue which would further promote this important collaboration.

Thank you.

SECRETARIAT OF THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION – OPENING STATEMENT

The IWC is an Inter-governmental organisation with a membership of 88 Contracting Governments. It was established under the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (1946) and its purpose is to provide for the conservation of whale stocks and the management of whaling.

The Commission is active in setting catch limits for subsistence whaling and in developing conservation and recovery measures for stocks which have previously been over-exploited. In addition, through the work of its Scientific and Conservation Committees, the Commission studies a broad range of environmental factors affecting the health and habitat of cetaceans. The Commission's work and studies extend across all ocean basins, and from the tropics to the Polar Regions. Several IWC initiatives have commonalities with NAMMCO's objectives on the conservation, management and study of marine mammals in the North Atlantic.

Collaboration between NAMMCO and IWC

Recent years have seen a growing collaboration between NAMMCO and the IWC. The NAMMCO Secretariat attended the IWC meeting in 2016 and made a comprehensive presentation on its work to improve hunting methods. NAMMCO also attended and contributed to an IWC workshop on strengthening the approach to management of Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling held in Maniitsoq in 2015. This is the second Council meeting attended by the IWC Secretariat and opportunities to continue collaboration are outlined below.

Continuation of work on cetacean welfare

The IWC's welfare programme was renewed and updated in 2016 and takes a holistic approach to cetacean welfare including both hunting and non-hunting related issues. A particular strength of the IWC's programme is its work to develop a global network to respond to entangled whales. Through this network, training events have taken place in many countries, some of which are within NAMMCO's geographical remit. The IWC's welfare programme is now starting to look at issues arising from other accidental factors including ship strikes and therefore has commonalities with NAMMCO's proposal to establish a new committee on non-hunting related welfare issues.

NAMMCO co-ordinates essential research on hunting methods. The reporting of this research to the IWC, such as that which took place at the Commission's 66th meeting, means that the learning can be discussed and shared with other subsistence hunts and thus continue the excellent improvements in hunting welfare.

Continued strengthening of the IWC's management of Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling

In 2014 the IWC adopted Resolution 2014-1 which recognised the need to regulate subsistence whaling through a more consistent and long term approach. A workshop organised in Maniitsoq in 2015 made many recommendations, including several which examined aspects of the IWC's process for agreeing catch limits and for improving the description of the subsistence hunts. The implementation of these recommendations will benefit from continued co-operation with NAMMCO, and are relevant to NAMMCO's current work programme on marine mammals as food resources.

Overall

There is much synergy between NAMMCO and IWC. The synergies include the issues described above, but also extend to scientific issues including cetacean survey methodology, calculation of abundances and the establishment of hunting management procedures.

NUNAVUT TUNNGAVIK INC.

In Nunavut, we have a quota system that is being regulated by our Canadian federal government on marine species. As we all know global warming is happening at a rapid pace. With climate change and loss of sea ice, people are looking more and more to the north-west passage opening up and the possible shipping route from east to west.

Our marine mammals in the north will be affected as more and more ship traffic takes place. We will need to work together.

IWMC WORLD CONSERVATION TRUST AND LIVIN LIVELIHOODS INTERNATIONAL Joint Statement

Madame Chair,

For my 40 years of involvement in international conservation of wild resources, I am generally proud of my achievements, except for one: my ability to be a prophet of the doom. So far, on two occasions, I predicted major changes in the conservation world:

- Firstly in 1990, when I said that "if 28 NGOs could succeed in firing the CITES Secretary General (appointed by the Parties) against the wish of the Parties, this would constitute a major step towards the highjacking of CITES by the Animal Rightists". **THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT HAS HAPPENED.**
- Secondly in 2007, I predicted that the Moratorium decided by CITES on Ivory trade of African elephants, was the equivalent of "writing the Poacher's Charter" and was opening the door to drastic increases in illegal activities related to ivory trade. **THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED.** Poachers and traffickers are now enjoying a free ride.

I am certainly not proud of having been successful with these two predictions. So, I am about to make a third major one with the hope that, this time, I will be **WRONG** and that this will be the end of my perfect record with predictions of the doom. I therefore predict that "*within one generation, the animal rights considerations will have completed its international takeover of Human rights considerations*", "Considerations" being interpreted as meaning all aspects of human life, including philosophical, legal, etc., either national or international. This will happen, unless...

I could spend hours providing you with evidence supporting that prediction. Those who participated in the last CITES CoP17, know what I am talking about. This *AR takeover* has already produced substantial negative effects on livelihoods, cultures and traditions – elements too often forgotten - on peoples all over the world. Just to name a few: a) the now infamous EU prohibition on seal products destroying Nordic cultures; b) The Botswana Bushmen who are criminalized for being hunters-gatherers, and c) the Sicilian fishers having to go on strike to save their rights transferred to dolphins.

... unless. The international community needs to react and it could very well be that the Flagbearer of this reaction be NAMMCO, which carries in its principles and in its actions, a strong cultural component. In one of the documents submitted to the attention of the NAMMCO Council, we read “*Marine Mammals: Feeding the Northern body and soul.*” That says it all.

As we progress in the meeting, with your permission, Madame Chair, I shall provide the Council with my advice on how NAMMCO could reinforce and enhance its leadership role on a worldwide basis, mainly with respect to items NAMMCO25/20 (*Communication and Outreach Strategy*) and NAMMCO2525/19 (Cooperation with international organisations)

Thank you, Madame Chair

APPENDIX 5 – SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATION BY THE INVITED SPEAKERS

“Whaling in west Greenland – then and now”

Anton Egede, Greenland

Anton has been a fisherman for 40 years and 15 years he has been a whaler. He appreciates the invitation to make a presentation on his experiences to the NAMMCO meeting. All hunters in Greenland are placed in the arctic region, situated in the corner of the outer limit for existence. The great nature is giving but also limiting in certain activities due to the harsh nature.

Humpback whales have been protected by IWC since 1980'ies. He was luckily the first one who was given a license to catch a humpback whale in 2009, when Greenland received quota from the IWC. Since from the beginning there were conflicts between hunters and tourist operators, when they hunt humpback whales as they are sharing the resources. Anton is of the opinion that professional hunters should have first priority, and that protests are based on emotions, not taken into account that hunters are living of whale hunting. Anton states that tourist operators are disturbing the foraging of humpback whales in the area when whale watching during their feeding time. He therefore encourages that whalers and tourist operators should make an agreement how to solve the situation in hoping that humpback whales will return to the fiord area.

The increasing numbers of humpback whales in Greenland have severe impact on fishing and fishing gears that humpback whales destroy. He is hoping that the problem will be minimized in the future.

In relation to fin whale hunting, the biggest challenge is the lack of flensing sites in Nuuk area. If the problem is solved, then there will be more hunting of fin whales. The situation with lack of flensing sites leads to a large amount of meat discard, because they are not able to flense a fin whale within the time between “ebbe og flod”.

When it comes to minke whale hunting, the season has been decided by IWC to be 9 months first of March to November 30th. Being in the Arctic, and the fact that global warming is affecting our activities in a severe way, we are limited in better use of our resources. Due to the uneasy weather, we have not yet caught minke whales in Nuuk area. In summer time, the fog is also an increasing disturbance in their whaling activities. Anton is therefore encouraging to open the minke whale hunting for whole year and not only 9 months.

Anton has consulted with the whalers along the coast and they are collectively proposing that the collective hunt of minke whale should be limited to the Spring period, especially thinking of fresh meat supply in early Spring. They also propose that reallocation during the Fall should only be for vessels with harpoon cannons. There are too many dinghies disturbing and scaring away the minke whales from the area. He also encourage that the officials should consider how to improve the hunting methods of riffle hunt. He is of the opinion that vessels with harpoon cannons should be prioritised.

He has also experienced that minke whales have changed their migrating routes and now are more northward, and that they have to use more time to follow the minke whales – sometimes up to Sisimiut area. While Greenland is not an agricultural country, he therefore reiterates his proposal to re-organize the collective hunt for minke whales.

“Animal welfare in the execution of hunting – a key to public acceptance of whaling and sealing”

Dr. Med. Vet. Egil Ole Øen, Wildlife Management Service, Drøback, Norway

There seems to be two main reasons for public objections to hunting, and in particular the hunting of marine mammals, namely the emotional concern regarding the animal welfare associated with the killing and the possible hazard of endangering the populations due to overexploitation.

The emotions in relation to the killing of animals are to be taken very seriously. Many people, in particular those living in the big cities, are today unfamiliar with livestock farming and slaughtering of animals for food, and will easily identify themselves with the animal and relate the situation to their own knowledge about the inevitability of death and its consequences. Ironically, the killing of animals carried out by predatory mammals has become an entertainment on television.

Some hunters claim that they cannot change weapons and equipment without violating their traditions. This is not an argument to warrant the use of weapons that are not optimal in hunts where more efficient weapons that kills the animal more rapidly and reduces the risk of losses, are available. Hunting traditions are not synonymous with the use of any particular kind of weapon. Developments and changes of hunting weapons have been in progress from the stone tipped arrows and spears up to the modern firearms and bullets used to day. Traditions are built on the preparation and the hunting action, the exercise and execution of the hunt and the utilisation of the products, not on a certain design of the weapons used in a certain period.

NAMMCO established The Committee of Hunting Methods (CHM) already in 1993 to monitor hunting practices and methods in the member countries and to work on improvements where necessary. The CHM has worked independently. It has invited outside expertise and hunters as consultants when appropriate and provided recommendations and advice to NAMMCO Council, member countries and associated members. As a rule, recommendations are adopted by consensus.

From 1999 to 2015 CHM has arranged 8 international workshops and expert working group (EWG) meetings where issues with relevance to safety for hunters, improvements of hunting technology and animal welfare are systematically addressed and discussed. The conferences have served as an important arena for scientists, hunters and managers to discuss relevant issues related to the execution of the hunt. It has encouraged and inspired managers and hunters of the importance of hunter training and respect for animal welfare in the execution of the hunt and to use the best available method to kill the animal as rapid as possible to reduce potential suffering and losses.

Members of the CHM has also carried out trials with ammunition and issued “Guidelines to test efficiency of rifle ammunition used for hunting and euthanasia of small whales”. In 2015, it also issued the booklet “Instruction manuals for the maintenance and use of weaponry and equipment deployed in whale hunting in NAMMCO member countries”.

From 1993 to present many hunts have been thoroughly investigated by CHM and it has also followed up that recommendations are implemented. However, there are still hunts in NAMMCO and associated member countries, which need improvements. A dedicated, independent CHM will continue to be the best to evaluate and advise how these hunts can be improved.

Today, whale stocks are growing. Management principles are taken care of and environmental concern for overexploitation of stocks from hunting is no longer a big topic. Animal welfare associated with hunting, however, will always be an issue also in the future and has not to be neglected.

APPENDIX 6 – AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR 2016

All figures in NOK

INCOME AN EXPENDITURE

Income

Contributions	4,379,001
Interest	3,413
Book sale	2,195
Employers Tax	240,398
NASS	5,282,796
Total income	9,907,803

Expenditure

Staff related costs	2,602,446
Rent of premises	232,975
Meetings	176,714
Travel and subsistence	354,909
Communications/Data & office supplies	94,009
Information, incl subscription	187,158
Accounts & auditing	126,447
Observation Scheme	163,338
Other expenses	11,261
Scientific Committee	172,800
NASS	5,405,889
Hunting Committee	21,483
Total expenditure	9,549,132

OPERATING RESULT

358,671

BALANCE

Assets

Outstanding claims	422,053
Bank deposits	4,653,631
Total assets	5,075,684

Equity

Distributable equity	
General Reserve	1,366,779
Restricted equity	
Total equity	1,336,779

Liabilities

Other	3,368,291
Creditors	300,493
Employers tax	40,121
Total liabilities	3,708,905

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

5,075,684

APPENDIX 7 – PRESS RELEASE

25 years of sustainable management

Nuuk, April 06, 2017 -

This year marks the 25th anniversary of NAMMCO. The importance of NAMMCO as a management organisation for marine mammals in the North Atlantic is confirmed by the progress accomplished during these years. The sustainable and responsible use of marine mammals has benefitted from

- better knowledge on marine mammal populations and their sustainable management,
- sound management advice that has contributed to increases in marine mammal population sizes
- significant improvements in hunting methods
- the establishment of an effective observation scheme for hunting activities in member countries.

At the meeting, the Council adopted a Communication and Outreach Strategy and decided to undertake a Performance Review of the organisation by external experts. A new website www.nammco.no was launched, containing information on the conservation and management status of all marine mammal population, as well as matters related to marine mammals in a broader sense. The Council also decided to advance the work on by-catch, entanglement and live strandings by establishing a Working Group dealing with these issues.

The parties reaffirmed their commitment to enhance their cooperation regarding marine mammal research, conservation, and management and the improvement of hunting methods. They agreed on a common declaration reaffirming their will in ensuring the sustainable and responsible use of marine mammals.

For more information concerning the Council Meeting outcome, see below.

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Appendix to Press Release

NAMMCO - the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission - is an international body for cooperation on the conservation, management and study of marine mammals in the North Atlantic. The North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission held its 25th Council meeting from 5 - 6 April 2017, in Nuuk, Greenland.

At the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Commission, the member countries of NAMMCO, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Norway firmly reiterated their commitment to ensuring the conservation and sustainable and responsible use of marine mammals through active regional cooperation and science-based management decisions.

Hunters from Greenland and representatives from the Association of Fishers and Hunters in Greenland participated in the meeting.

The Governments of Canada and Japan were represented by observers at the meeting, as well as other international governmental organizations within the fields whaling (International Whaling Commission, IWC) and conservation (IWMC World Conservation Trust, Livelihood International). A large delegation of Nunavut also participated to the meeting, with members of the Government of Nunavut led by the Minister of Environment Joe Savikataaq, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

Key events and conclusions from the meeting included the following:

25 years of Hunting

Anton Egede had been invited to present the hunters experiences of the changes that had taken place in the management of marine mammals during 25 years. His presentation “*Whaling in west Greenland – then and now*” underlined in particular the visible effect that climate change is having on the availability of marine mammals to the hunters.

Dr. Med. Vet. Egil Ole Øen, through his invited presentation “*Animal welfare in the execution of hunting – a key to public acceptance of whaling and sealing*” described the work conducted for improving hunting methods during the 25 years of NAMMCO. He presented in particular the substantial improvement that had happened both regarding animal welfare, e.g. reduced time to death, and hunters’ security.

Inspection and Observation of Hunts

NAMMCO operates an international observation scheme to monitor whether national legislation and decisions made by the Commission are respected. Observers are appointed to report on hunting activities in member countries. The scope for 2017 is minke whaling in Iceland.

Whale and seal Surveys

Surveys were carried out in the NAMMCO member countries in 2015 and 2016 to update the knowledge on abundance and distribution of cetaceans in the North Atlantic. At NAMMCO-25, new abundance estimates based on the data collected during these surveys were presented for fin, humpback, common minke and pilot whales, harbour porpoises, and dolphins.

New abundance estimates were also provided for grey and harbour seals in Norway.

International Cooperation

With the unforeseeable consequences of climate change on marine mammals, the Council reiterated its will to increase the cooperation between organisations dealing with marine mammals.

Quota advice

New quota advice was given for fin whales and minke whales off Iceland, harp seals in the Greenland Sea and White/Barents Sea.

Scientific Advice

The best scientific evidence forms the basis of management advice in NAMMCO. Through the Scientific Committee, many specialist topics are addressed by Expert Working groups. During 2017, topics to be dealt with include 1) stock assessments of fin, humpback and common minke whales as well as narwhals and belugas, 2) a global circumpolar review of the conservation status of beluga and narwhal stocks, 3) a review of by-catch of marine mammals by NAMMCO countries, and 4) a workshop in cooperation with scientists having conducted surveys in waters adjacent to the NAMMCO survey areas to gain a wider perspective on cetacean distribution and abundance in the whole North Atlantic.

The Scientific Committee was also tasked to advise on the best process to investigate the effects of non-hunting related anthropogenic impacts on marine mammals.

APPENDIX 8 – NUUK DECLARATION

Nuuk, April 06, 2017

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION (NAMMCO)

The Parties,

Recalling the general principles of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources enshrined in the 1992 Rio Declaration and **reaffirming their commitment** to the rational management, conservation and responsible use of the living resources of the sea,

Considering the progress accomplished in the last 25 years towards the sustainable and responsible use of marine mammals within NAMMCO, and particularly:

- better knowledge on marine mammal populations and their sustainable management,
- sound management advice that has contributed to increases in marine mammal population sizes,
- the increased coordination of the Parties' marine mammal research and monitoring, leading to a greater understanding of the role of marine mammals in the North Atlantic marine ecosystem,
- the significant improvements in hunting methods,
- the establishment of an effective observation scheme for hunting activities in member countries;

Welcome these advances and **reaffirm** that NAMMCO fulfils its role as an appropriate international management organisation for marine mammals in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Remain convinced that a regional body, built upon mutual understanding, trust and respect for each other's ways of life, and operating on a sound scientific basis, is the best forum for ensuring the effective conservation and sustainable use of marine mammal resources, as part of the effort on food security worldwide.

Reaffirm their commitment to enhance their cooperation in marine mammal research, conservation, and management, in improving hunting methods and in providing balanced and scientifically founded information on the status of North Atlantic marine mammal stocks as well as issues and challenges in their conservation.

Reaffirm that the sustainable hunting of marine mammals as done in NAMMCO member countries is an environmentally responsible way of obtaining food resources in areas with few alternatives and supports food security in line with the principles endorsed at the 2012 Rio+20 Conference. It also increases the economic value of the marine environment, contributing to blue growth.

Call for the management of marine mammal resources according to the principles of blue growth, as promoted for other marine food resources.

Recognising the range of anthropogenic pressures facing North Atlantic marine mammals associated with the climate and environmental changes taking place,

The Parties further commit to increasing their efforts and cooperation in assessing the cumulative impact of non-hunting related anthropogenic stressors, particularly global warming, by-catch, pollution and disturbance, and to furthering the ecosystem approach to the management of marine mammals.

APPENDIX 9 – NEW PROPOSALS FOR CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

ALL SPECIES

Recommendations regarding by-catch

- Norway, increase the reliability and the accuracy of the by-catch data in areas with high by-catch (i.e. especially Lofoten and Vesterålen) by increasing the number of vessels included in the CRF and ensure a better species identification of by-caught seals.
- Iceland, obtain by-catch rate for the cod gill net fishery outside the April peak season,
- Faroese, modify the logbook for allowing for by-catch species identification and provide to the next WG meeting data on the fleet especially on the pelagic and semi-pelagic trawl fisheries including VHVO trawl (fleet composition, relative effort and by-catch information).
- Greenland, provide information on the reliability of by-catch reporting for all species.

General recommendation that fisheries expertise should participate at meeting and that the work should be linked to the ICES Working Group on By-catch.

SEALS AND WALRUSES

Grey seal

Norway

- Development of the model to see if it can be modified to account for the observed changes in pup production.
- More frequent surveys, particularly in the areas of decline.
- Tagging of grey seal pups.
- Age-structure of the hunt assumed to be the same as for the by-catch, and this assumption needs to be tested
- Complete the genetics study within this year
- Increase the number of vessels in the reference fleet in the areas of high by-catch (especially Nordland)
- Reporting of all removals. Currently there is little to no reporting of removals around fish farms and from both commercial gill net fisheries and recreational fisheries

Iceland

Primary

- A Management Plan should be developed including: the frequency of surveys, legislation of seal hunting and re-evaluation of the target population level objective with the new level being based on biological criteria.
- A complete survey should be conducted to obtain a full, reliable abundance estimate
- Reporting of all removals (e.g., by-catches, hunted seals, any other removals)

Next steps

- Pup production surveys at least 3 times to make sure that the peak pupping period is covered.
 - o Iceland should also consider tagging pups for staging.
 - o Iceland should also investigate whether the peaks in pupping differ in different areas around the country.
- Genetics samples should be collected and analysed to explore stock structure

The need for a reporting system for direct catches was underlined to be able to model the status of the population.

Faroe Islands

- develop a monitoring plan that includes regular assessments.
- based on existing data analyse population viability (population size necessary to sustain the levels of removals)
- Analyse existing UK telemetry data for possible migration between the UK and the Faroes.
- new research to be undertaken

First Priorities

- Obtain minimum population estimates via haulout counts.
- Obtain reliable and complete reporting of all removals (e.g., all companies operating fish farms need to report).

Secondary Priorities

- Telemetry tagging studies to develop correction factors for the haulout counts and also obtain information on movements and distribution
- Samples should be collected from animals shot at farms (e.g., jaws to obtain information on age, sex, genetics etc.).
- A study using cameras to observe animals going in and out of caves
- Photo-ID study for a mark-recapture based population size

Harbour Seals

Norway

- Increase the number of vessels in the reference fleet in the areas of high by-catch (especially Nordland that has a long coastline)
- Increase survey effort. Important areas could be identified to be surveyed in between other full-coast surveys.
- Management by county should be re-examined, as these management units do not always follow the population structure of harbour seals, especially Nordland county.
- Reporting of all removals, including removals around fish farms, or of by-catches in commercial gill net fisheries and recreational fisheries.
- Collect data from by-catches (age, sex, etc.).

Iceland

- An assessment survey of the entire population should be conducted as soon as possible
 - Surveys should then be conducted every 2 years while the population is lower than the target level
- All removals should be reported (e.g., hunting, by-catch, etc.)
- A Management Plan should be developed including outlining the frequency of surveys and legislation of seal hunting
- The target population level objective should be re-evaluated and be based on biological criteria.
- Reproductive rates should be collected
- The effects of disturbance from tourism should continue to be investigated
 - Develop mitigation measures
- The method of catching pups in nets should be investigated. In NAMMCO, killing methods should be immediate. This issue should be referred to the NAMMCO Hunting Committee.

Norway

Recommendations for the Norwegian Harbour and Grey Seal Management Plans

- the target population levels for both species should be evaluated as the levels are not based on any biological assessment.
- to recommend that the quota is set to 0 when the population is at 70% of the target level instead of 50%.
- Management plans should include all sources of mortality, not just the hunt.
- A mechanism for consulting IMR on for example seal distribution when fish farms are being built should be required when management plans are revised.

Walrus

Greenland

The SC had reviewed past recommendations from the 2013 Walrus Working Group, and recommended prioritized these for a future assessment:

- 1) New abundance estimates
- 2) Age-structure of catches
- 3) Catch statistics from Canada (*available*)
- 4) Struck and lost rates. This is lowest priority for the assessment, however not having newer, reliable struck and lost rates will affect the quotas given (e.g., if the struck and lost rates that are being used are high, then the quotas will be lower). If better struck and lost rates are obtained, quotas may increase.

CETACEANS

Fin whale

All the parties involved in fin whale estimation (NASS, Americans, Canadians, etc.) should cooperate to be able to work towards combining the estimates from different areas and different years. This would likely increase the current total abundance for the North Atlantic of 53,000 fin whales (IUCN 2013).

Quota advice

A catch limit of 161 fin whales in the WI area and 48 in EI/F area (based on application of the RMP to the EG+WI+EI/F region) is safe and precautionary, and that this advice should be considered valid for a maximum of 8 years (2018 to 2025).

New recommendations for research to inform a future assessment

- Information on stock identity: Incorporating samples from a wider geographical area into an existing study on close-kin relationship of whales caught off Iceland and Greenland, e.g. using biopsies.
- Gathering information on the annual cycle of fin whales including overall movements and indications of possible breeding areas (e.g. applying satellite telemetry).
- Continued collection of biological samples for age, reproduction, etc. from whales caught off Iceland.

Minke whale

Iceland

Quota advice

Annual catch of about 360 minke whales is a lower bound for the sustainable catch for the Central North Atlantic medium area, and the advice of the WG of catch levels of 217 common minke whales from the CIC sub-area.

New recommendations for research to inform management

- Update after RMP Implementation Review, use this to provide long-term advice
- MSY rate re-evaluated, determine more appropriate MSY rate
- collection of age/sex/reproductive data (existing information is outdated, low sample sizes) (New proposal 3.2.6)

Belugas and narwhals

Regarding **R-1.5.3**, the SC recommended that:

- Issues of disturbance should be discussed at the NAMMCO-JCNB JWG
- Detailed information on the Mary River Project should be made available to the JWG

- JWG should routinely include information sharing on projects that would affect belugas and narwhals in Baffin Bay
- There is a need for a formalized mechanism for cross-border assessment for how these shared stocks are dealt with.
- The SC recommends that GINR is consulted when projects are in development, before final approval, or if the project plans change and/or develop further.

New recommendations for research to inform management

The SC recommended additional satellite tagging to get information on movements and distribution.