



**TWENTY SIXTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**  
**7 - 8 March 2018, Tromsø, Norway**

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**Submitted by:      SECRETARIAT**

**Action requested:**

- For information

## Overview of meeting attended in 2017-18

### Meetings attended by the Secretariat on behalf of NAMMCO:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Represented by</b>
22-27 January	<b>Arctic Frontiers</b>	Tromsø, Norway	GD
29-30 April	<b>Workshops associated with ECS conf.</b>	Middelfart, Denmark	GD
1-3 May	<b>European Cetacean Society (ESC) 31</b>	Middelfart, Denmark	GD
9 May	<b>Conference on sustainable utilisation</b>	Copenhagen, Denmark	CW
05-07 September	<b>ASCOBANS AC</b>	Brest, France	GD
06-07 September	<b>CAFF Board Meeting</b>	Fairbanks, Alaska	JP
10-13 September	<b>World Seafood Congress 2017</b>	Reykjavik, Iceland	GD
11-13 October	<b>CAFF / CBMP Marine</b>	Anchorage, Alaska	JP
13-15 October	<b>Arctic Circle</b>	Reykjavik, Iceland	GD
19-20 October	<b>Sjøpattedyrutvalget</b>	Tromsø, Norway	CW
22-27 October	<b>Society for Marine Mammalogy Biennial</b>	Halifax, Canada	JP, GD
08 November	<b>Nordismødet / NCM</b>	Oslo, Norway	GD
29 November	<b>EU Parliament meeting on Sealban</b>	Brussels, Belgium	GD
30 November	<b>Meeting on QR Code for Seal Skin</b>	Brussels, Belgium	GD
30 November	<b>Think.dk</b>	Copenhagen, Denmark	GD
1 December	<b>The SDGs in the Arctic: Local and Global Perspectives, DK UM</b>	Copenhagen, Denmark	GD
7-8 December	<b>Norwegian Small Whalers Union</b>	Svolvær, Norway	CW
15-17 December	<b>Venice Human Rights Cultural Festival</b>	Venice, Italy	GD

### Meetings where NAMMCO was represented by a member country:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Represented by</b>
6–9 June	<b>NASCO 34 Annual meeting</b>	Varberg, Sweden	Faroes*
18-22 September	<b>NAFO 39 Annual meeting</b>	Montreal, Canada	Iceland
13–17 November	<b>NEAFC 36 Annual meeting</b>	London, UK	Norway

\* Report not received at time of uploading

### **Arctic Frontiers, January 22-27, Tromsø, Norway**

Desportes attended on behalf of NAMMCO. Arctic Frontiers is an annual international arena on sustainable development in the Arctic. The conference addresses the management of opportunities and challenges to achieve viable economic growth with societal and environmental sustainability. It has four pillars Policy, Business, Science and Young. The theme of the 2017 conference was “*White Space – Blue Future*” and aimed at qualifying the gap in knowledge about the Arctic oceans and the role these will play in the future.

Desportes was co-organiser of one of the scientific session on “*Future Fisheries*” and delivered the talk “*Using an Ecosystem Approach to management of marine mammals: challenges and benefits to ensuring sustainable exploitation and balanced fishing*”.

### **Workshops associated with European Cetacean Society (ECS) Conference, Middelfart, Denmark, 29-30 April**

“Effects of PCB exposure in killer whales and other threatened toothed whale species of the North Atlantic” (April 30).

Desportes attended on behalf of NAMMCO. The workshop aimed at making a status of the art and evaluate gap in knowledge and initiate cross-institutes/organisation collaboration.

### **European Cetacean Society – 31<sup>st</sup> annual meeting, Middelfart, Denmark, 1–3 May**

#### **“Conservation in the light of marine spatial use”**

Desportes attended on behalf of NAMMCO (only 1<sup>st</sup> day). The conference aimed at highlighting current issues and emphasised the importance of marine planning as a management tools for the conservation and sustainable use of the seas and marine mammals.

NAMMCO presented two posters – one on “*Necessity and challenges in using an Ecosystem Approach to the management of marine mammals: ensuring sustainable ecosystem services*” (JP and GD as authors) and one on “*The Geometer: A new device for aerial surveys*” (JP & GD as co-authors).

### **Conference on Sustainable Utilisation of Marine Mammals, Copenhagen, Denmark, 9 May**

Winsnes attended on behalf of NAMMCO and gave the presentation "NAMMCO 25 years - role, experience and responsibility".

The Conference was organised by the Faroese parliamentarians in the Danish Parliament “Tjóðveldi” and the Arctic Working group. Target audience was parliamentarians with the aim of informing on sustainable use of marine mammals and the importance of scientific based information as a basis for opinions and governance. Moderators were: MPs Magni Arge and Sjúrdur Skaale. The conference was in attended by some 80 people and was also live streamed The language was both Nordic and English with interpretation.

The speakers represented an interesting mix of scientists; biologists and an resource economist, managers, a rock singer and an author and journalist:

*Bjarni Mikkelsen*, Færøernes Naturhistoriske Museum: Balancen i havets økosystemer kan måles  
*Sven-Gunnar Lunneryd*, sælforsker ved Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet: Problemet mellem fiskere og sælen i Østersøen og tilhørende løsningsmuliger

*Mike Hammill* DFO, Canada: Increasing seal stocks and pressured fishing resources

*Aleqa Hammond*, Greenlandic parliamentarian, MF

*Amalie Jessen*, Departementet for Fiskeri og Fangst: Havpattedyr som fødevareressource.

*Ola Flåtten*, Norwegian college of fishery science, The Arctic University of Norway: The socio-economic importance of marine mammals

*Charlotte Winsnes*, NAMMCO: NAMMCO - 25 years on – Role, experience, and responsibility

*Heri Joensen*, heavy metal singer Týr: Stand up for your rights

*Tim Ecott*, author and journalist: Hunting Marine Mammals and the Media

### **ASCOBANS AC, Brest, France, 5-7 September**

Desportes attended the AC 23 meeting, organized as usual in two sessions: a scientific session and an institutional session. A number of Expert and Working Group reports were presented and discussed. The meeting reviewed new information on threats to small cetaceans and considered steps for mitigating the impacts of human activities on the animals and their habitats. The documents are available at <http://www.ascobans.org/en/meeting/AC23>

Following the decision of NAMMCO 24 to increase its scientific cooperation with organisations dealing with marine mammals, an invitation was conveyed to ASCOBANS MOPs8 for such an increase in cooperation. The NAMMCO Scientific Committee recommended that a review and assessment of the status of harbour porpoise stocks in the North Atlantic be conducted in 2018. It had supported the participation of ASCOBANS and other European Scientists to such an exercise. The NAMMCO secretariat sent therefore to the Chair of the ASCOBANS AC and the ASCOBANS Secretariats an invitation to organise jointly a North Atlantic Review of Harbour Porpoises. The response from the Secretariat was positive and both Secretariats had some exchanges on how to proceed.

At AC 23, Desportes presented a general update on NAMMCO aims, structure and activities, lastly developing the proposal for the joint review of North Atlantic harbour porpoises. Although many attending scientists and some delegations were in favour of this cooperation, the AC did not agree on embarking in a specific scientific cooperation with NAMMCO and declined NAMMCO's invitation, in contradiction with the Work plan activity 61, adopted by MOPs8 in 2016 (Resolution 8.2):

*"61. Seek to cooperate closely with CBD, ECS, HELCOM, ICES, IWC, NAMMCO, OSPAR, UNCLOS, UNEP and other relevant organizations".* When this contradiction was pointed out by GD, one of Heads answer was that *"seeking a cooperation was different than getting it"*.

### **CAFF Board meeting, Fairbanks, Alaska, 6-7 September**

Prewitt attended on behalf of NAMMCO. This was the first meeting of the CAFF board under US Chairmanship. The Chair is Cynthia Jacobsen from US Fish and Wildlife. The CAFF members are generally representing ministries and management departments and discusses current activities and future directions of the CAFF.

Prewitt gave a short presentation on the activities in NAMMCO with relevance to CAFF, specifically on Arctic marine mammals. The board member from the Kingdom of Denmark (representing Greenland) noted that there are many experts who work with both CAFF and NAMMCO, and that it would benefit both organisations to have a close cooperation.

### **World Seafood Congress 2017, Reykjavik, Iceland, 10-13 September**

Desportes attended on behalf of NAMMCO. The WSC is a biannual event owned by the International Association of Food Inspectors (IAFI). The focus of the WSC 2017 was on growth in the Blue-Bio economy, practical approach and cutting-edge research for market innovation, food safety and food integrity. The three main pillars were: Seafood Innovation, Food Integrity and Food safety. The World Seafood Congress brings together a global audience of seafood processors and importers, academia, public and private organisations, fish inspectors and government and other diverse disciplines to provide them opportunities to exchange information and ideas and foster interaction. Desportes presented the only talk dealing with marine mammals *"Sealing and Whaling and Blue Growth": Coherence or paradox?"*

The interest of participating to these non-marine mammal conferences, is to present the NAMMCO message to people unfamiliar with NAMMCO and often with the concept of marine mammal as food resources. A direct output of this conference was to meet with a researcher from the research Institute of Sweden (RISE) presenting the work of her group on Life Cycle Assessment (LCA). A pilot project was initiated with her group at the end of December called “Food choice in Greenland” and which will make a comparative LCA for ringed seal meat and an imported alternative meat product for a Greenlandic Community.

### **CAFF – Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP), Anchorage, Alaska, 11-13 October**

Prewitt attended on behalf of NAMMCO. The CBMP group within CAFF is probably the most relevant group within CAFF for NAMMCO. This meeting was a joint meeting between the Marine and Coastal groups. NAMMCO has been active in the Marine group (currently chaired by John Bengston from the US Marine Mammal Laboratory), with Desportes attending a couple of previous meetings, and contributing to the writing of the State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report (SAMBR).

- The SAMBR was a large project for the CBMP-Marine group, and there were many discussions on how to get a wider circulation of the report, especially to the managers and other people who may be able to influence how this report can be incorporated into management decisions and future monitoring goals. The group realised that all participants must play a part in discussing the report in a wider context, including presenting it to their management. Tom Barry, Executive Secretary of CAFF will attend the NAMMCO SC meeting and give a presentation on the SAMBR.
- The Coastal group is fairly new, and most of their meetings were focused on how to start their monitoring program. A big question for all trophic levels is how the Marine and Coastal groups can work together without duplicating information, and supplementing each other’s work. The Coastal group is also focusing heavily on basing their monitoring program on using Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). These discussions will continue as the Coastal group’s plans coalesce.
- Prewitt gave a presentation on the Global Review of Monodontids meeting. The participants agreed that the results from this meeting were relevant to the work of the Marine Mammal Expert Group within the CBMP – Marine, and will be incorporated into their future work.

### **Arctic Circle, Reykjavik, Iceland, 13-15 October**

NAMMCO, in liaison with the WWF Arctic Programme and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, convened the Breakout Session: “Arctic Sealing: Treath or Blue Prospect” at the Arctic Circle Conference in Reykjavik, Iceland 14 October 2017. The programme - four talks and a panel discussion addressed the questions:

Can (some) populations of Arctic seals qualify as blue resources contributing to food security? Do they represent a sustainable resource with a low ecological cost that meets the dietary needs and food preferences of Arctic communities? Is sealing responsibly managed? Do bans on seal products protect Arctic seals?

#### Speakers

*Gabriel Nirlungayuk*, Director of Inuit Programs and Services Division, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.  
Title: Importance of sealing for Arctic communities

*Genevieve Desportes*, General Secretary, North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission  
Title: Is Arctic sealing responsible in an ecosystem perspective?

*David Lee*, Wildlife Biologist, Department of Wildlife and Environment, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.  
Title: Expectations of the Nunavut Agreement in Sustaining Wildlife Populations.

*Gert Polet*, Head of Forests & Wildlife Unit, WWF  
Title: Perception and reality: threats to ice seals in a changing Arctic

The panel participants :

*Adamie Alaku*, Vice President-Resource Development, Makivik Corporation, Quebec, Canada

*Aaja Chemnitz Larsen*, Member of the Danish Parliament, Greenland

*Alethea Arnaquq-Baril*, Producer of *Angry Inuk*, Canada

*Dwayne Ryan Menezes*, Director, Polar Research and Policy Initiative (PRPI), UK

*Eggert Jóhannsson*, Furrier, Iceland

*Geir Oddsson*, Senior adviser, Nordic Council of Ministers

Around 120 participants came from Inuit communities in Alaska, Inuvialuit, Nunavut, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut and Greenland in addition to participants from Canada, several European countries, Iceland, Norway and USA.

The screening the evening before of the documentary “The Angry Inuk” from Alethea Arnaquq-Baril, constituted as a good introduction to the debate. The documentary presents the dire consequences of the seal ban for communities in Nunavut and the general misinformation vehiculated and consequent lack of knowledge on the realities behind Arctic Sealing.

NAMMCO concluded the session by underlining that for NAMMCO the only keywords were sustainability and ecological responsibility and that NAMMCO did not make any differences between Inuit or other coastal communities, not recognising the notion of indigenous sealing or whaling. All had the same right and duties, especially the duty of improving hunting methods for example and that for the sake of the hunted animals. The hunting activity (time, place, target) as such represented the traditional aspect, not the hunting method.

#### **Sjøpattedyrutvalget, Tromsø, Norway, 19-20 October**

Winsnes attended on behalf of NAMMCO. This is an annual meeting for all relevant actors dealing with marine mammals. Information on all research and management issues are given and discussed, and the meeting gives recommendations to the authorities. It is attended by representatives from the ministry, directorate for fisheries and relevant research institutes. Although this is a national forum, NAMMCO has been invited to participate in recent years.

#### **Society for Marine Mammalogy Conference, Halifax, Canada, 22-27 October**

Prewitt and Desportes attended on behalf of NAMMCO. The conference consisted of 5 days of oral and poster presentations and plenary talks. Among many themed sessions, this year’s conference had sessions that were specifically focused on climate change, which were directly relevant to NAMMCO. These included multiple presentations on Arctic species and highlighted the rapid changes in the Arctic that are already affecting these species.

NAMMCO rented exhibitor space (e.g. a booth) where copies of the NAMMCO Scientific Publications volumes, and NAMMCO diverse informational leaflets were displayed. The posters presented at the ECS conference were also displayed, “*Necessity and challenges in using an Ecosystem Approach to the management of marine mammals: ensuring sustainable ecosystem services*” and “*The Geometer: A new device for aerial surveys*”. The booth was staffed during all breaks and numerous time during sessions. It provided an important opportunity to talk with people who did not know about NAMMCO and connect with other organisations. It also was a good opportunity for colleagues to easily find NAMMCO to discuss future work.

NAMMCO had in particular many contacts with the Makivik Corporation (Québec, Resource Development Dept.) and the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRW), Ways of reinforcing

contacts and initiating a cooperation was discussed. Partly as the results of these contacts, Makivik apply for the observer status at NAMMCO.

GD took the opportunity to visit the Secretariat of NAFO in Dartmouth.

#### **Nordistmøtet – Nordic Council of Ministers, Copenhagen, Denmark, 8 November**

**Desportes attended on behalf of NAMMCO. The meeting is organised by the Nordic Council of Ministers in relation with a meeting of the** Nordic Committee of Senior Officials for Fisheries and Aquaculture, which also attend as well as the Expert Working Group. Another issue. A number of “Nordics” that work at relevant international institutions and organs are invited to present the issues that are on their agenda that are of interest for the Nordic Cooperation. Of direct interests to NAMMCO, were present representatives from FAO, ICES, and OECD. Desportes delivered the following presentation: “Contributing to a Sustainable North – NAMMCO”.

#### **“How can we support indigenous people's sustainable hunt in the Arctic? The initiative of a QR Code for Seal Skin”, November 29, European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium.**

**Desportes attended on behalf of NAMMCO.** The meeting was organised by the European Parliament Intergroup on “Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development”, on the initiative of J. Dohrmann MEP. Representatives from the European Institutions and from the Commission DG ENVI, Member States, Customs, Retail sector and Stakeholders including a high-level delegation from Greenland with the participation of the Minister for Fisheries and Hunting, representatives from the Government of Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Canada, Inuit from Nunavut and Alaska and WWF, attended the meeting to exchange views on the QR Code information initiative. GD delivered the following presentation: “Arctic Sealing: a Blue Activity”. A summary of the event, all document and presentations can be accessed [here](#).

Following the event, Desportes was asked by Euroactiv to write an article based on her presentation “Which is more blue, Arctic Sealing or the EU Seal Ban?”, which can be accessed [here](#) as well as other articles and interviews related to the EU parliament event.

One direct positive output of the meeting was to meet and exchange with the person from the Commission DG ENVI responsible for sealing and whaling related issue, Marc Richir.

#### **“A new way to support indigenous peoples sustainable hunt in the Arctic - Seminar about launching the QR Code initiative for Seal Products”, November 30, Danish EU Representation, Brussels, Belgium.**

The seminar had a different audience than the EU Parliament event, but much of the same programme. Desportes delivered the same presentation: “Arctic Sealing: a Blue Activity”.

#### **Think.dk, 30 December 2018, Copenhagen, Denmark**

**Desportes attended on behalf of NAMMCO.** [Think.dk](#), Centre for Acceleration of Change, is a new and small co-creative community, think tank and event platform that supports the development of a sustainable society. Their activity encompasses film and documentary screening and debate. They define themselves as “usually supporter of Greenpeace-like associations”. One of the event organisers had participated to the BOS co-organised by NAMMCO at the Arctic Circle, and also saw during the Assembly the screening of “Angry Inuk” (Alethea Arnaquq-Baril, Nunavut). She asked GD to make a presentation on the same line in association a screening of Angry Inuk.

Over 10 persons, including Greenlanders, followed the screening, presentation and debate, which was very wide covering many aspects of the issues at hands. The feeling was to have been and be misled

and misinformed by NGOs propaganda, and the importance of being extremely critical and seek information from several sources in any environmental debate.

In January, GD received a mail from one of the organisers which is worth quoting: ... **“and let you know that I very soon will be the proud owner of a real (used) seal fur. I got it as a Christmas present from my boyfriend. Really looking forward to the nice discussions I will have wearing it”**. So even “usually supporter of Greenpeace-like associations” can change their mind when presented with reliable and credible facts and a good message platform.

### **The SDGs in the Arctic: Local and Global Perspectives, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1 December**

**Desportes attended on behalf of NAMMCO.** The main objective of the International High-Level Conference on “SDGs in the Arctic” was to bring in global, local, public and private sector representatives to reflect on ways to strengthen sustainable economic development and to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Arctic by 2030. UN SDGs, in particular Goal 14, but also 1, 10, and 12, are of relevance to the scope and mandate of NAMMCO because as a Regional Sea Agreement it plays an important role in ocean governance and the protection of the North-East Atlantic marine mammals, and in supporting the delivery of the biodiversity targets, but also in supporting Arctic Communities in their access of local natural food resources.

Attendance allowed to connect with other organisations and in particular the Executive Secretary of OSPAR.

### **Norwegian Small Whalers Union (NSWU), Svolvær, Norway, 7-8 December**

Winsnes attended on behalf of NAMMCO and gave the presentation “25 år med NAMMCO - hva er oppnådd?”. Participants to the meeting represented the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Fisheries, various Directorates, Fisheries Associations and research institutes as well as minke whale hunters and buyers.

The discussions centred around the 2017 season which represented the worst season in many years with only 11 active boats and 432 animals caught. Weather condition combined with a very low minimum price and not optimal marked conditions were identified as the main reasons for this decrease in boats and catches.

Generally NSWU underlined that whaling needs to be both profitable for those involved and that the rationale for hunting must be seen in the light of sustainable management of resources.

NSWU underlined the importance of NAMMCO and its work and reiterated the importance that Norwegian authorities continue and strengthen this regional cooperation.

The annual meetings are now held bi-annually with the next planned for 2019.

### **Venice Human Rights Cultural Festival, 15 & 17 December 2018, Venice, Italy**

**Desportes attended on behalf of NAMMCO.** The 2-day festival was organised by the students of the European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation (EMA) from the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation (EIUC) - over 90 students from 34 nationalities from all over the world. The annual festival encompasses different cultural activity, including documentary screenings and debate. As GD was in Venice, she had proposed to the organisers the screening of the documentary *Angry Inuk* (Alethea Arnaquq-Baril, Nunavut), followed by a presentation on the ecological side of the issue “Arctic Sealing – an Ecosystem Perspective”.

The public was composed by most students, some professors and some external participants, in total over 150 persons. The film and presentation were very well received and complemented. The 1-hr



debate covered widely the issues at hands, from the sustainability of the specific hunt and other sealing and whaling activities, the ethical and ecological aspects of whaling and sealing, alternative food resources in the Arctic and their ecological cost, indigenous rights, NGOs influence on public opinion... The attendance, particularly the students, were particularly sensitive to human and indigenous rights, but also ecology and nature conservation. Many participants expressed the feeling to have been mis-lead and misinformed by NGOs and media. Some Canada and USA students had demonstrated in the past against sealing and whaling. The last question of the moderator was whether they would now consider buying sealskin product which sparked an overall affirmation. Several students expressed later that they would screen the documentary in their network, also in conservation circles.

Focussing on like event is interesting because it reaches a very wide public in terms of background and future work destination, both geographically but also category wise, and therefore create an interesting pool of ambassadors. Also, because the public is very sensitised to human and indigenous rights, the message is easier to pass on.

### **Report of NAMMCO observer (Iceland) to the 2017 Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation Annual Meeting (NAFO)**

The 39th Annual Meeting of the NAFO took place from 18 to 22 September in Montréal, Canada.

Delegates from 11 NAFO Contracting Parties were welcomed to Montréal by NAFO President, Stéphane Artano, and the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard.

The meeting was the first Annual Meeting held under the amended NAFO Convention, which came into force 18 May 2017. These amendments to the Convention modernize NAFO, particularly by incorporating an ecosystem approach to fisheries management. This approach includes safeguarding the marine environment, conserving marine biodiversity and minimizing the risk of long term adverse effects of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem. The amendments also streamline NAFO's decision-making process, strengthen the obligations of Contracting Parties, Flag States and Port States, and institute a formal dispute settlement mechanism.

In addition, to the traditional total allowable catch and quota decisions, significant decisions were made regarding:

- Management strategy for Greenland halibut. This management plan shall be in force from 2018 to 2023 and the TAC for this stock will be adjusted annually depending on the agreed Harvest Control Rule (HCR).
- NAFO agreed to relaunch its second performance review. This performance review will be completed by the next Annual Meeting in September 2018 and will address: conservation and management; compliance and enforcement; governance; science; international cooperation; financial and administrative issues. The previous NAFO performance review took place in 2011, with all of its recommendations having been addressed.
- NAFO agreed to protect the entire New England Seamount chain, amending the boundary of the area closed to bottom fishing to include all peaks in the chain. The

protection of the entire chain as a whole will help in sustaining the biological connectivity and function of seamount communities at all depths. In addition, procedures leading to these closures were further streamlined.

- NAFO agreed to a benchmark assessment of cod on the Flemish Cap in 2018. This benchmark assessment will explore the robustness of the current assessment model and evaluate alternatives including multi-species models, with a number of international experts being invited to review. This assessment aims to improve confidence in future assessments of this stock.

NAFO re-elected current President, Stéphane Artano (France in respect of Saint Pierre and Miquelon), for his second term, and Temur Tairov (Russian Federation) was elected as vice-Chair.

### **Report of the NAMMCO Observer (Norway) to the 2017 Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)**

The 36th annual meeting of NEAFC was held in London from 13 to 17 November 2017.

At the meeting, conservation and management measures for the year 2018 were adopted for a number of fish stocks. These include blue whiting, herring, mackerel, redfish and haddock.

NEAFC is progressing further in its work regarding improvements to the conservation and management of deep-sea species, among other things ensuring that fisheries for deep-sea stocks/species not subject to other conservation and management measures only to expand gradually to allow for information to develop to assess sustainability. Current measures include prohibiting fisheries directed at deep-sea sharks, rays, chimaeras and spurdog, in addition to catch limits being set for several stocks of grenadiers. Bans on fisheries targeting basking shark and porbeagle remain in effect.

The protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), such as corals, continues to be an important issue for NEAFC. NEAFC has already closed bottom fisheries in all areas where VMEs are known to occur or are considered likely to occur according to scientific advice. During the meeting NEAFC received the latest scientific advice regarding the occurrence of VMEs. In response to the advice, NEAFC extended the current VME closures for an additional five-year period, and expanded the coverage of some of its areas closed to fishing.

NEAFC continues to place great emphasis on action against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fisheries. A major step to enhance monitoring, control and enforcement was taken when the basis for an Electronic Reporting System (ERS) for NEAFC was formally adopted in 2016. This year's adoption of the United Nation's international standard for exchange of fisheries information was a further step forward in this process. Development of technical solutions for the ERS will continue in 2018.

NEAFC's cooperation with other international organizations was highlighted. This includes the collective arrangement with the OSPAR Commission for the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic, as well as good cooperation with several other organizations, in particular the FAO. Continued representation of NEAFC's approaches and achievements at international meetings taking forward global developments on fisheries and oceans governance was encouraged.

The cooperating non-Contracting Party status of the Bahamas, Canada, Liberia, New Zealand and St Kitts and Nevis was renewed for the year 2018. These States cooperate with NEAFC and, in some cases, deploy vessels for transshipment operations in the NEAFC area.