



NORTH ATLANTIC MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

REPORT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2017 SEASON OF THE NAMMCO INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATION SCHEME UNDER THE JOINT NAMMCO CONTROL SCHEME FOR THE HUNTING OF MARINE MAMMALS

INTRODUCTION

The following report has been prepared in accordance with article B.7.2 of the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme for the Hunting of Marine Mammals.

Article B.7.2 states: “The Secretariat prepares an annual report of the observation scheme, in which the implementation of the scheme is described, for the review of Council. The document shall include reports of any violations, as well as other relevant comments.”

PLANS FOR OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES

In December 2016 the Secretariat developed a proposal for the scope and range of observation activities for 2017 with related budget for these activities. (Guidelines to Section B, item 14). The proposal was approved by Council by 1 January 2017.

The suggested scope for observation activities in 2017 was whaling in Iceland contracting two observers.

APPOINTMENT OF OBSERVERS

Per item 11 of the Guidelines, member countries shall submit a list of observer candidates for the following year to the Secretariat by 15 November. The list shall include information on the qualifications of candidates, including their educational background, language skills, and experience in inspection or any other areas relevant to Council in its consideration of their appointment as NAMMCO observers.

For the 2017 season the list of nominated observer candidates was approved without changes by the Council by 1 January 2017.

OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES

The scope of the observation scheme for 2017 was whaling in Iceland. When it became clear that there would be no fin whale hunts this season, only one observers was contracted to observe the minke whale hunt. The observer was contracted for the period 26.06 – 18.07 with 26.06 and 18.07 representing travel dates, resulting in 21 days of observation.

The observer joined two hunting boats – one during 3 trips and one during 1 trip. Several chases were observed - some with shots being fired without hitting the whale and some without firing shots due to not optimal shooting position. During the whole observation period 2 minke whales were taken, both on the same boat, and no whales where struck and lost.

Two boats were active during the whole season and a total of 17 whales were taken. No struck and lost were reported. The total hunting season was from 2 June to 2 December with the last animal caught 24 July. The catch per boat was 10 and 7 animals.

During his observations on boat 1, 2 animals were taken out of a total of 10 for the whole season. The observer also observed 8 chases and shots being fired without hitting the whales. On boat no 2 he observed 1 chase and one shot being fired without hitting the whale.

The observers carried out the observations in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme. No violations were reported, and reports have been submitted to the Secretariat.

Prior to the observation period, the observers had been provided with the Provisions of the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme for the Hunting of Marine Mammals and had received an overview of the national laws and regulations pertaining to hunting of marine mammals in Iceland. The observer also met with a representative from the Fisheries Directorate, his contact person when in Iceland, upon arrival in Iceland and regulations, list of control for national inspections and all necessary information on active hunting boats and contact details were reviewed.