

NAMMCO



**COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS
REPORT**

14 FEBRUARY 2018

@ North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission

Please cite this report as:
NAMMCO (2018) Report of the NAMMCO Committee on Hunting Methods 14 February
2018

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*Postbox 6453, Sykehusveien 21-23, N-9294 Tromsø, Norway,
+47 77687371, nammco-sec@nammco.no, www.nammco.no, www.facebook.com/nammco.no/*

The Committee on Hunting Methods (CHM) met on 14 February 2018 from 09:00 – 17:30 hrs. Present were Guðni Magnús Eiríksson and Kristján Loftsson (Iceland), Kathrine A. Ryeng and Hild Ynnesdal (Norway), Amalie Jessen and Nette Levermann (Greenland), Signar Petersen (Faroe Islands). From the Secretariat: Geneviève Desportes, Strahinja Ivanovic (intern) and Charlotte Winsnes.

1. OPENING REMARKS AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The chair, Guðni Magnús Eiríksson, welcomed the participants to the meeting. The meeting reviewed the agenda and list of documents – appendix 1. The agenda was adopted with the agreement to address item 7 SWOT before item 6 Video on handling of explosive grenade, and the inclusion of an information item under AOB.

2. UPDATE FROM MEMBER COUNTRIES ON HUNTING METHODS AND REGULATIONS

Documents [NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/02](#) list of references on hunting methods in member countries and [NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/03](#) overview of laws and regulations in member countries had been circulated prior to the meeting. No changes or additions to the two documents had been received or were tabled in the meeting.

The Faroe Islands **Regulations**

No new regulations in 2017.

Quotas, number of active boats, hunting period

There is no regular quota system in the pilot whale hunt, and all small boats can participate. The drive hunt can take place all year around.

Catches and irregularities

In 2017 there were 25 drives of which 18 were for pilot whales. The total catches were 1203 pilot whales and 488 Atlantic white-sided dolphins. No irregularities were reported.

Strandings,

No strandings were reported.

Greenland **Regulations**

A revision to the Executive Order regulating the hunt on large whales is out on public hearing. The change concerns the hunting period for minke whaling, forwarding it 14 days, so instead of March 1 to November 30, it will be from March 15 to December 14. The hunting period is defined by the IWC Schedule to be 9 months. National revisions can thus only apply to changes in start and end dates with the total period remaining unchanged. The changes follow the input and recommendations from hunters, based on the availability of the whales.

Quotas

The national quotas for large whales in 2017-2018 is based on the advice from the IWC Scientific Committee and approved by the IWC Commission.

The quotas are:

- West Greenland: 164 minke whales, 19 fin whales, 10 humpback whales, 2 bowhead whales
- East Greenland: 12 minke whales
- Carry-over numbers have been added for both years

Number of active hunting boats

There were approximately 30 approved whaling boats with harpoon guns and approximately 400 smaller boats using rifles and harpoons were active in whaling activities in Greenland in 2017.

Catch numbers including struck and lost

Whale catches in 2017:

- 8 fin whales in West Greenland, (about average for the last five years)
- 133 minke whales, including 4 struck and lost in West Greenland
- 10 minke whales in East Greenland, including 1 struck and lost

This represents about the average hunt of minke whales for the last five years in West Greenland. For East Greenland the quota was fully utilized in the area of Tasiilaq. The quota was not fully taken in East Greenland because of the ice conditions, the ice edge was far from the shore, and consequently the whales remained in waters out of reach for the small vessels.

- 2 humpback whales (lowest number since the quota was given) and 0 bowhead whale
- 164 belugas in West Greenland (quota 320) and 32 in Qaanaaq (quota 20; technical, 5-year quota is given for 100 animals, 14 left for 2018)
- 134 narwhals in West Greenland (quota 231), 108 in Inglefield Breeding (quota of 98 animals+17 carry over), 86 in Melvin Bay (quota 80+5 carry over) and 91 in East Greenland (quota 98+27 carry over). Extra political quota to EGRL, and Melville Bay on narwhal
- 35 walrus in West Greenland (quota 69), 73 in Northwater (quota 85) and 3 in East Greenland (quota 18)

The catch numbers for beluga, narwhal and walrus includes struck and lost (S&L) without specifying the actual numbers of S&L. A revision in the management on walrus this year based on advice from the NAMMCO SC is that S&L for walrus after reporting will not be drawn from the quota. This is seen as a way of achieving information in a collaborative effort between scientist, hunters and management. When the trial period is finished, the goal is to have a S&L rate based on actual hunter reported numbers of S&L.

There are no quota regulations on other small cetacean or pinniped species in Greenland.

Hunting period

The hunting periods for fin whale and humpback whale are from 1 January to 31 December and for minke whale 1 March to 30 November and bowhead whale 1 April to 31 December.

Irregularities

One reported infraction of national legislation on large whales was dismissed by the Police after interviewing the involved people.

Strandings

No strandings had been reported in 2017, however 3 observations of floating dead whales, 2 bowheads and 1 fin whale were observed.

By-catches

3 humpback whales: 1 dead, 2 freed themselves.
1 bowhead along the coast of West Greenland.

1 minke whale on the East coast in a large pelagic trawler fishing mackerel.

Iceland

Regulations

There have been no changes to the regulations in Iceland in 2017.

Quotas, number of active boats, hunting period, catches, irregularities

Minke whales

Quota: 269 minke whales, including carry over from 2016.

Hunting period: 2 June to 2 December with the last whale caught 24 July.

Catch: 17 taken by 2 vessels. No struck and lost.

Irregularities: none reported.

Fin whales

Quota 175 fin whales, including carry over from 2016.

No hunting took place in 2017.

Eiríksson informed the meeting that Iceland had carried out TTD sampling in the minke whale hunt in 2017. Due to low catches only 6 animals were sampled making the total number of animals 19 for the TTD sampling which have taken place in 2015, 2016 and 2017. The recommended number of sample size was 25 animals and there are considerations to continue the sampling programme the next season. Analyses is currently taking place.

Hunters report that they did not find animals where they would normally do and believe that the distribution of the stock has changed. Iceland has also expanded the geographical ban area, reserved for whale watching, resulting in previously favourable hunting grounds disappearing.

Strandings

12 strandings were reported in 2017.

Norway

Regulations

There have been no changes to the regulations in Norway in 2017.

Quotas, number of active boats, hunting period, catches, irregularities

Whaling

Quota: 999 minke whales

Active hunting boats: 11 vessels

Hunting period: 1 April – 15 September

Catch: including 1 struck and lost: 432 minke whales

Irregularities: None were reported

Sealing in the West Ice

Quota: 26 000 harp seals

Hunting period: 1. April – 30. June

Active hunting boats: 1 vessel

Catch: 1033 harp seals, including 7 animals for scientific purposes

No commercial hunt was allowed for hooded seals, but 17 animals were taken for scientific purposes

Irregularities: None reported.

The Ministry of trade, industry and fisheries has since 2016 reintroduced some financial support to the sealing industry. One vessel was subsidised and participated in the hunt. The vessel was granted permission by relevant authorities to conduct the seal hunt in Greenlandic and Icelandic waters, due to bad ice conditions in Norwegian areas.

Coastal sealing

Harbour seal - quota: 455, catch: 338

Grey seals - quota: 210, catch: 81

Both quotas were set according to the management plans for grey seal and harbour seal.

CHM took note of the information presented by member countries.

3. OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UPS FROM ALL WORKSHOPS AND EXPERT GROUP MEETINGS

Document [NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/05](#) was presented under this agenda item. It contains an overview of all recommendations and responses from all Workshops and Expert Group meetings organised by the CHM.

CHM reviewed the document and agreed that the time frame of this meeting did not allow for a full review of all the recommendations and follow up in detail. The Committee requested that the response overview be diversified between member countries, CHM and Council, and that every entry be referenced and dated.

CHM tasked the Secretariat to revise the document according to this new structure and circulate it to CHM. CHM furthermore agreed to fill in the relevant information pertaining to follow ups by each country.

CHM welcomed the overview and noted that will serve as a valuable input when discussing future actions/focus of the committee.

3. STRUCK AND LOST (S&L)

Document [NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/04](#) was presented under this agenda item. It contains the updated working document on S&L. CHM had agreed in 2016 that document NAMMCO/CHM-October/2016-5 giving the known S&L rates for different hunts should be used as a working document for the Committee in its work on S&L. The tabled updated working document had been supplied with an overview of all hunts and known struck and lost data in NAMMCO.

CHM attention was also drawn to the NAMMOC SC discussion of S&L at their last meeting in November 2017 which concluded that the collection of S&L data should be prioritised for hunts where more reliable S&L data would make the most *significant difference in terms of quota allocation*.

For the CHM the animal welfare issue is the focus and prioritising should be done based on this. CHM agreed that it was a good idea to identify some priority hunts where S&L are thought to be high and where the catches are relative high. CHM had previously agreed that collection of S&L data for large whales were controlled and that the big challenge was with respect to the small whale hunts. CHM (Feb 2017) did not have any concrete solutions but pointed out that there might be a need for reviewing regulations for those hunts where S&L are thought to be high.

CHM discussed how to calculate and present S&L rates and agreed that the best way of calculating S&L rates were as the average of the annual rates for a range of years, including the information of the range.

CHM reviewed the S&L table provided. It covered 2 different reference sources, see below, and CHM agreed to also include hunters estimates where these are known. The table will thus have the different regions and hunts with S&L rates referenced by S&L rates based on published or grey literature, S&L rates used in NAMMCO advice and S&L estimations by hunters.

CHM discussed the description of the hunts and how the hunts had been categorised. For large whales the descriptions were based on the report of the Expert Groups on assessing TTD for large whales (2010 and 2015), for small whales the description had been taken from the report of the Expert Group meeting assessing hunting methods for small whales (2011), for walrus it was categorised according to stocks and the description of the seal hunts were taken from the document Overview of hunts in NAMMCO member countries (2018).

CHM agreed that the table was a good tool and tasked the Secretariat to update the table according to the input from the meeting. Furthermore, it was agreed that the revised table would be circulated to the members for their review and updating.

CHM discussed priority hunts for collection of S&L. The Norwegian pack ice hunt was interesting because no specific information exists on S&L. It was believed that the S&L rate might be very low for the hunt on weaned pups, but there might be some adult animals that are lost each year. The hunt represents a very “easy” hunt to sample S&L rates and would as such be a valuable exercise.

CHM also identified the harbour and grey seals hunts in Iceland as a priority. No information is currently available on S&L and these stocks are decreasing. It was also noted that only fragmented reporting exists on seal hunts in Iceland and that there was a need for improvement. In Greenland the narwhal and beluga hunts should be a priority. They represent important subsistence hunts where presently catches are reported with S&L included, and the S&L rates used in assessment models are very high due to uncertainty on S&L rates.

CHM also discussed how the collection of S&L data could be carried out. Due to the nature of the narwhal and beluga hunts, observations are difficult to carry out. Two or more hunters go out in small boats and there is no requirement to inform wildlife officers in advance of a hunting trip. Reducing S&L in any hunt requires identifying the reasons why S&L occur. CHM believed that one possible solution to identify reasons and estimate S&L rates would be self-reporting by hunters through filming the hunt, either by having a camera on board the boats or using GoPro cameras. Levermann informed the meeting that collection of data by the use of GoPro had been introduced to the members participating in the project on local knowledge *PISUNA* in Disko Bay. It was noted that for this to happen it would be especially important to communicate to the hunters what they would gain from reliable S&L estimations, i.e. that it might have favourable consequences on the quota.

CHM also noted that any solution involving self-reporting by filming would bring up the question of hunter’s property rights to the material.

CHM agreed to recommend to Council:

- For Greenland to collect SL data on narwhal and beluga.
- For Iceland to collect SL data on harbour and grey seal
- For Norway to collect SL data on harp seal

5. COLLECTION OF TIME TO DEATH (TTD) DATA

NAMMCO 24 tasked CHM to organise a workshop on alternative methods for collecting standardised TTD data that are less expensive, thus making it easier to compare TTD between countries.

CHM had postponed a more indebt discussion at previous meetings to be able to discuss the issue in more detail internally in the member countries.

CHM agreed that the established standardised method of colleting TTD data used in Iceland and Norway for the whale hunts is the best and most accurate method. The recommendation of the Expert group meeting on assessing TTD held in 2015 is that all hunts should be monitored with regard to TTD and Instantaneous death rate (IDR) at 10-years intervals unless other important issues arise that require more frequent monitoring. CHM acknowledged the high cost implications and also that for some hunts this method is not feasible.

Self-reporting by hunters has become an increasing trend internationally. CHM agreed that this method could represent a tool to identify possible problem areas with respect to efficiency of hunts, and that it would be a good supplement to the 10-year intervals of standardised collections.

In Greenland TTD and IDR is based on hunters self-reporting. Hunters report on TTD and IDR (IDR, defined as TTD below 1 minute by the managers when reviewing the data), and strike location. CHM discussed items for inclusion in self-reporting like strike location, location of detonation and distance between the two. The possibility of adding photos of entrance, detonation and exit wounds for veterinarians to review was discussed as a mean of getting more information. However, the probability of being able to get good enough photos was questioned. CHM agreed that self-reporting on IDR/TTD combined with description of entrance and exit wounds can give important indication on the efficiency of the hunt.

CHM agreed that it would be of great interest to compare self-reporting by hunters with the controlled scientific method. As a start this could be done by analysing already collected Norwegian data together with Greenlandic data. Norway furthermore proposed to undertake some preliminary studies on-board a Norwegian whaling vessel in the 2018 season. It was furthermore agreed to recommend organising a Workshop on alternative methods to collect data on the efficiency of the hunts.

CHM also discussed that it would be interesting to compare hunting efficiency in terrestrial and marine mammal hunts and the possibility of organising a workshop on this issue. As a starting point the Secretariat was tasked to initiate a review of the available literature with the aim of making a comparison. It was mentioned that this could be a good subject for an internship for a veterinary student, who could work under the supervision of Kathrine Ryeng.

CHM agreed to forward the following recommendations to Council:

The Committee discussed alternative methods to collect TTD data.

- The Committee recommends looking further into the possibility of implementing self-reporting methods to describe the killing efficiency of the hunt. To that end, Norway will undertake preliminary studies in the 2018 season.
- The Committee recommends convening a workshop on alternative methods to collect data on the efficiency of the hunt.

6. VIDEO ON HANDLING OF EXPLOSIVE GRENADE

Greenland has developed in collaboration with Henriksen Mekaniske Verksted (manufacturers of the grenade) an instruction video on handling of the penthrite grenade-99 on harpoon guns. The video was shown at NAMMCO 25 and Greenland requested CHM to give comments on a text for narration to the video.

The meeting reviewed the video and agreed that due to lack of time at this meeting, the committee would discuss and agree on a text by correspondence. The aim is to make narratives that make the video useful in all NAMMCO member countries. One general remark made was to insert arrows on the drawings for the different elements of the grenade.

CHM agreed to recommend that the video be finalised for use of all NAMMCO countries. New narratives will incur costs and Levermann was asked to look into the price for this.

7. SWOT

Document [NAMMCO/CHM/CIO/BYCELS-2918-02 SWOT](#) was presented under this agenda item.

As an input to a strategy and capacity building discussion going on in NAMMCO, and as a tool for future evaluation, the Chair of NAMMCO, Amalie Jessen, has initiated a SWOT analysis to see where

NAMMCO and the different committees stand in terms of strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

FAC had discussed the status of the SWOTs and agreed that it should be done and kept for internal use only. In that way responses would be more in depth and frank. Timing wise it is optimal to do the SWOTS now prior to the Panel Review (PR) report, so that a comparison can be done with what the PR comes up with.

The meeting reviewed the SWOT, see appendix 2. It was underlined that particular elements in the SWOTS do not necessarily represent the view of all members.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be in the period 26 – 28 November with final date to be coordinated with the meetings of CHM and BYCELS.

9. AOB

Levermann informed the meeting that the price of the harpoon by Henriksens Mekaniske Verksted had increased by 400 %. So in Greenland another type of harpoon from Delprodukt A/S in Kvål would now also be made available for sale in Greenland.

10. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

The report was approved by correspondence on 1 March 2018.

AGENDA

1. Opening procedure
 - Introductory remarks
 - Adoption of agenda and review of documents
2. Update from members on hunting methods and regulations
3. Overview of recommendations and follow ups from all WS and Expert Group meetings
4. Struck and Lost
5. Collection of TTD data
6. Video on handling explosive grenade
7. SWOT
8. Next meeting
9. AOB

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/01: Annotated agenda and list of documents
NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/02: List of references on Hunting methods
NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/03: List of laws and regulations in member countries
NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/04: Struck and lost – working document
NAMMCO/CHM-2018-02/05: Overview recommendations and follow ups
NAMMCO/CHM/CIO/BYCELS-2018-02: SWOTS